

NO LONGER
HOPING

Nílim Ag
Súil Feasta

DICK KEOGH

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------|-----|---------------------|
| 1: | 1 John Ch.5 vs. 9-13 | 9: | Titus Ch.3 vs. 4, 5 |
| 2: | 1 John Ch.5 v. 13 | 10: | Titus Ch.2 v. 11 |
| 3: | 1 John Ch.5 v. 11 | 11: | Romans Ch.3 v. 24 |
| 4: | John Ch.14 v. 6 | 12: | 1 John Ch.5 v. 13 |
| 5: | John Ch.3 v. 16 | 13: | John Ch.3 v. 16 |
| 6: | Romans Ch.3 v. 23 | 14: | Isaiah Ch.45 v. 22 |
| 7: | Romans Ch.5 v. 8 | 15: | Isaiah Ch.1 v. 18 |
| 8: | Galatians Ch.2 v. 20 | | |

At Protestant funerals the minister would also try to comfort the heartbroken mourners. Their hearts were breaking because they did not actually know if the soul of their loved one had gone to Heaven. Family members, along with friends and neighbours, were **HOPING** all was well between the dear departed one and God. The Minister was also **HOPING**. But none of them actually knew.

I wondered what might happen at the time of my death. I could picture myself on my deathbed. I knew I would certainly be **HOPING** to go to Heaven. I would definitely be **HOPING** I would not go to Hell. What a fearful situation to be in when you are dying! How terrible it would be to be uncertain about where you are going! I really longed to know for certain that I would go to Heaven when I died. Many years later I was still **HOPING**. At this stage I was married and had a family. If my children had asked me if I knew for certain I would go to Heaven when I died, I would have had to say, "I **HOPE** so, but I don't actually know." I wished I did know!

KNOWING

In November 1975 I met a friend of mine who told me he definitely knew he would go to Heaven when he died. I had known this man for many years. For

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hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son'. (3)

Eternal Life is in a Person

According to the Scriptures eternal life is therefore in a **PERSON (Jesus Christ)** and His work on the sinner's behalf. For the first time in my life I was confronted with the fact that eternal life is in a Person and not in a Religion. Jesus Himself said, "**I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**" (4) For many years I had believed that Religion was the way to eternal life. But now I could see that the Scriptures were not speaking about Religion but about a Relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. I was reading in God's Word about the importance of believing in, trusting in, and depending upon this Person.

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

God's Love

Jesus also said that "**God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**"(5) The Saviour said that '**God so loved the world.**' But did that include **ME**? Did

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because of what **GOD** has done on our behalf. It is because of His **MERCY** that He saved us. He has had mercy on the sinner. In these verses it mentions the fact that the kindness and love of God appeared. But where and when did the kindness and love of God appear? According to the Scriptures, God's love was manifested and demonstrated publicly at Calvary as the Lord Jesus Christ suffered and died upon the cross as a substitute for sinners. God's Word made it clear that it did not matter what good works I did or what efforts I made to save myself. It did not matter which Church I belonged to. None of these things could ever save my soul. The message of the Bible was clear. Salvation was bestowed because of God's mercy.

What a great challenge this was to me! For many years I had been **HOPING** I could earn or merit Salvation by being religious, depending upon the Church and doing my best. But I had reckoned I would never know until after I died if the Church had done enough for me or if I had done enough myself to secure my Salvation. Now, for the first time in my life, I was confronted with what God said in His Word. It was clear that the Church, regardless of which one I belonged to, could never save me. It was also very clear that my good works and best efforts could not earn or merit Salvation for me. But in the Scriptures I read the **GOOD NEWS** - the Lord Jesus Christ did enough, through His death on the cross, to save me.

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God actually love me as an individual? I knew I was a sinner and that my sin had to be paid for. In fact I read in the New Testament that '**all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.**' (6) I knew I was certainly included there! God's Word was crystal clear. It very specifically stated that we are all sinners. But I was greatly encouraged when I read that '**God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**' (7) How my heart began to warm as I read those precious words.

It was fine to read of God's love for the **WORLD**. But what about **ME**, as an individual?

My question was answered when I read the words of the Apostle Paul. He referred to Jesus as '**The Son of God, who loved ME, and gave himself for ME.**' (8) This was just what I needed to know! The Apostle Paul, who wrote the book of Galatians, knew that God loved the world. But he also knew that God loved him as an individual. He knew that Christ had suffered and died for him on the cross at Calvary. He knew that Jesus became the sinner's substitute and paid in full the penalty for the guilt of the sins of all who would repent and put their faith in Him. This was just what I needed to know too! I realised I was a sinner and that my sin had to be dealt with. I longed to know if God loved **ME** so much that He sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to die for **MY** sin.

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you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that Ye may know that ye have eternal life. John was saying, '**Ye may know!**' This really challenged me to examine my own heart to see if I had this assurance of eternal life that I read of in the Scriptures."

CHILDHOOD DAYS

For many generations our family had been devout Roman Catholics. One of my ancestors had allowed her home to be used as a Chapel where mass was said regularly. My parents were very involved in their Church. My mother was a great woman of prayer and regularly said Novenas and Rosaries. She devoted much of her time to the worship of the Blessed Virgin Mary and many of the Saints. My father belonged to the Holy Family Confraternity, a men's organisation which met once each week to worship Jesus, Mary and Joseph, known collectively as 'The Holy Family'.

Our parents had a great influence on us when we were children. I remember all of us kneeling down together in the evening time and saying the Rosary to the Blessed Virgin Mary. I also accompanied my father to many of the Holy Family Confraternity meetings over the years.

My school days began at the local Convent where

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School. He had been confirmed and was regularly attending the services in his Church. He considered himself to be a good Protestant and sincerely **HOPED** this would get him to Heaven.

I **HOPED** the Roman Catholic Church would work on my behalf and do all that was necessary to help get me to Heaven. My friend also **HOPED** the Protestant Church to which he belonged would make every effort to secure a place in Heaven for him. Both of us **HOPED** our respective Churches would be actively engaged in securing Salvation for us.

After I left school I got a job with an undertaker. At the funerals I saw many heartbroken people crying at the gravesides. They were **HOPING** the soul of their loved one, who was being buried, had gone to Heaven. At Roman Catholic funerals the priest would try to comfort the family. But he, too, was only **HOPING** the soul of the person who was being buried had gone to be with the Lord. The priest did not know; neither did the family nor any of the mourners."

"Hoping to Secure a Place in Heaven"

Just in case the deceased had not done enough while he or she was alive and had not worked hard enough to earn Salvation, the priests would say Masses for the Dead. They were **HOPING** this would help get the person to Heaven. Family and friends would buy

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INVITATION

Dear Friend,

Perhaps you have been 'doing your best' for many years. Maybe you have spent a long time **HOPING** that membership of a particular Church can get you to Heaven. But today you are still only **HOPING**. You have no assurance that all is well between you and God. You may be sincerely **HOPING** that as a result of your prayers and religious exercises you will earn Salvation. But you do not **KNOW!** Instead of looking to religion or looking to your own good works to save you, why not look to the Lord who said, '**Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.**' (14)

The Lord invites you to come to Him right **NOW!** '**Come NOW, and let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.**' (15)

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by becoming their substitute and paying the penalty for sin they should have paid. Christ suffered Hell on the cross so that sinners need not go to Hell.

Paul also tells us that we are '**justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.**' (11) God's Word says we are justified '**FREELY**'. This means Salvation is given freely by God to sinful people. The sinner is not required to work for it or to earn it. Salvation is God's **GIFT** to the sinner. God could give this free gift to sinners because of the fact that their sins have already been paid for by Jesus. I could now see that Salvation was God's **FREE GIFT** to **ME!**

NO LONGER HOPING

By faith I reached out to God, saying, "Lord, I know I am a sinner and that I deserve to go to Hell. I know that there is nothing the Church can do for my Salvation. I also realise there is absolutely nothing I can do to merit a place in Heaven. Throughout my lifetime I have been **HOPING** that I could be saved as a result of a combination of the Church's work on my behalf and my own good works. I thank you for showing me that this is not possible. Thank you for showing me in the Scriptures that Salvation is a gift which you freely give to the sinner. I am so grateful

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