

## Chapter 6 - The Helmet of Salvation

If you've ever wondered what the helmet of salvation is, look at the verse from Paul's letter to the Thessalonian church where he defines it as hope:

*But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. (1 Thessalonians 5:8, NIV)*

I can't imagine living in this world without hope. How could we possibly get through the pain of suffering and the agony of loss without the hope of something beyond the scope of this world?

Jesus says, *"I've gone to prepare a place for you..."* Those are the words I hold on to. Those are the words that remind me that this world isn't my home. That is the hope that I cling to when everything else is slipping away. He goes on to say, *"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."* (John 14:3, NIV)

This hope of salvation took on an entirely deeper meaning for believers when Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead. Paving the way, He was the first of many to follow. We don't serve a God Who merely *offers hope*, we serve a God Who is *the living hope* for all who believe.

In Leviticus 23:42-43, we read about the annual Feast of Tabernacles, where the Israelites were instructed to live in temporary shelters for seven days. These temporary dwellings were a physical reminder to them of what their ancestors had to live in for over 40 years as they wandered through the desert on their way to the promised land. It's also physical reminder to us that this world is nothing more than a temporary dwelling as we wait for the return of our Lord.

In Matthew Chapter 17, we see Jesus taking Peter, James, and John up the top of a mountain. Suddenly, He's transfigured before them. Shining as bright as a light, He is standing with Moses and Elijah. Note that in verse 4, Peter offers to build them each a shelter. See the connection here? It was the feast of tabernacles, a time for Jesus to illustrate the hope of salvation.

Jesus shone in His glorified body before them--a glimpse of His resurrection and power. But why Moses and Elijah? What was the significance of them being there with Jesus that day? The three were a representation of the coming kingdom in all of its glory. Moses represented believers who enter the kingdom through death. Elijah, a prophet who never saw death but was taken up to heaven in a whirlwind, represents believers who enter the kingdom through the rapture of the church. And let's not forget the fourth one that was with them that day--the voice of the Father exalting His Son.

The placement of this portion of scripture is vital. It immediately follows the words of Jesus telling them that He would not only die, but that He would return again with the angels in all of His glory.

I remember the year that my dad found out he had cancer. Most importantly I remember the joy and the peace that he had as he walked around the house singing,

*Because He lives, I can face tomorrow*

*Because He lives, all fear is gone*

*Because I know He holds the future*

*And life is worth a living just because He lives*

*(William and Gloria Gaither, Capitol Christian Music Group)*

In other words, there's a reason I can face tomorrow, there's a reason that my fear is gone, and there's a reason that life is worth living. That reason is the hope of salvation that comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

In 2 Peter Chapter 1, Peter points out how our faith isn't based on fables or clever stories, but on eye-witness accounts. He was there to witness the majesty of Jesus that day on the mountain and to hear the voice of the Father proclaim Christ as His Son.

In the same chapter, Peter refers to his body as a tent that he would be putting aside when he departed this earth. And so, we see this message throughout the Old Testament, and into the New—the temporary dwelling of the tabernacle or tent, in which our spirit resides, but more importantly, a hope of salvation through Christ. Without that hope of salvation, nothing makes sense.

In 2005, The National Science Foundation published an article in regard to human thought. According to the article, research indicated that 80% of our thoughts are negative and 95% are the same repetitive thoughts as the day before.

This negative pattern of thinking tells me that we need to be pro-active when it comes to protecting our minds. When Satan attacks he aims for the head. He plants thoughts in our minds designed to discourage, depress, and cause doubt. Isn't that the tactic he's used from the beginning of time? Appealing to Eve's hunger for knowledge and wisdom, the serpent succeeded in drawing her in.

Anyone who's been on a diet knows the pain of exchanging the long-term benefits that come with staying the course for a temporal high. And yet, in a sense that's what we're doing when we choose to follow our lust at the cost of our faith. We're choosing to cling to a world that is wasting away instead of the hope set before us.

What's interesting to note however, is that there's a benefit to our suffering. It produces endurance. If you've ever seen a strong person it's likely that they've been through a lot in their life, and it was those obstacles that produced perseverance. Perseverance in turn proves the

validity of our character. If you are truly a servant of God you will continue to be faithful to God, and that faithfulness is the very thing that builds hope.

*And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.  
(Romans 5:2b-4)*

## Pause and Reflect

Q. What are some long-term goals that you've had? What are some of the the short-term benefits that either slowed you down or prevented them from happening?

### Fill in the Blanks:

For in this hope we \_\_\_\_\_. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not \_\_\_\_\_, we wait for it \_\_\_\_\_.

(Romans 8:24-25, NIV)

If only for this life we have \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ, we are of all people most to be \_\_\_\_\_. (1 Corinthians 15:19, NIV)

In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a \_\_\_\_\_ through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

(1 Peter 1:3b, NIV)

Q. What two things are the temporary shelters found in Leviticus 23:42-43 a physical reminder of?

Q. What is The Helmet of Salvation according to 1 Thessalonians 5:8?

Q. What happened on the mountain in Matthew Chapter 17? Who was there with Jesus?

Q. What did Moses and Elijah each represent at the transfiguration? What connection would this have to The Helmet of Salvation?