

LOOK AT THINGS THAT ARE UNSEEN



(II Corinthians 4:18; Titus 2:13)

For our light, momentary affliction is ever more and more abundantly preparing and producing and achieving for us an everlasting weight of glory, **since we consider and look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are visible are temporal, but the things that are invisible are deathless and everlasting** (II Cor. 4:17-18).

Visible and invisible things are ever being introduced to us by means of circumstances (visible) and faith that sprouts from the reading the Word of God. Those whose hope depends solely on things seen are the most miserable of men. They are as the illustration YAHSHUA gave concerning the man who built his house on sand. Its foundation lasts only as long as there is no change in the environment or weather. But soon as they change, the foundation disappears with them. The foundation of things is the most important part of any plan to be

successfully substantiated. YAHSHUA said that life did not consist in and is not derived from possessions; life is more than things, as food; and the body more than clothes (Luke 12: 15,23). These are temporal and seen things available to us as part of life, but they are not to control and dictate our state of mind.

YAHSHUA commanded us to strive for and seek the kingdom (Luke 12: 31,32-34). Seeking God's kingdom first, we are striving to look at things that are unseen, which are in the spiritual dimension of YAHSHUA'S Word. The tangible things are not absolute to life, but the spiritual, are. When we consider the things that are unseen, while going through our trials, life and purpose become more meaningful and bearable. The Apostle Paul directs us to a more substantial way of living through hope that endures to the end, bringing us to our finishing line by considering the unseen things, which are everlasting. When we believe only in things we touch and see, we are limited in our beliefs and voided of faith. Our Lord YAHSHUA endured the cross, despising and ignoring the shame considering the joy that was set before Him (Heb. 12:2). Yes, there is joy at the end of the road for the believer, who sets his priorities on the unseen things, for they are heavenly, heavily weighted with promises that will never fail. Paul said, If we who are in Christ have hope only in this life and that is all, then we are of all people most miserable and to be pitied (I Cor. 15:19). Hope only in this life is temporal and short. It ends with life's end. But hope that springs forth from God's promises builds and elevates the soul no matter in what circumstances- in sickness, or in health, in poverty, or in riches. Hope, however, that is based on things that are seen, is not hope at all.

While the world turns upside down in its spiritual and moral decay, the believer has an Anchor that holds them securely in the enduring hope that comes from faith. Faith, as the writer to the Hebrews wrote, is the assurance of things hoped for, being the proof of things [we] do not see and the conviction of their reality. For by faith the men of old had divine testimony borne to them and obtained a good report. (Heb. 11:1-2). The heroes and heroines of faith of old depended on the hope of the unseen things to endure the sufferings they underwent. They were tortured to death with clubs, refusing to accept release, so that they might be resurrected to a better life. Others had to suffer the trial of mocking and scourging and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned to death; they were lured with tempting offers [to renounce their faith] they were slaughtered by the sword; [while they were alive] they had to go about wrapped in the skins

of sheep and goats utterly destitute, oppressed, cruelly treated – men of whom the world was not worthy – roaming over the desolate places and the mountains and [living] in caves and caverns and holes of the earth. All of these, though they won divine approval by their faith, did not receive the fulfillment of what was promised (Heb.11: 35-39). Faith on the promises of the unseen things sustained them to the end.

What do these words tell us? It tells us to look directed to the things that are unseen, for they are the strength of our hope; the certainty of things we hope for. Allowing faith to control the hope we have in the promises of God, we will be considered having fought the good fight. Having fought the good fight, the Apostle Paul hoped for the victor's crown of righteousness, a thing he had not seen, but hoped for, based on his knowledge of God's promises. Paul, a hero of faith like the others we mentioned, did not experience what was promised him before he died. But he confidently relied on the hope founded on faith that brought him victory. At times he desired to leave this earth to receive the promise of a better home in heaven. But his love for Christ compelled him to continue the work to lead many people to salvation so that they too would live a life of faith and hope on the things not seen. Writing to the Philippians he expressed his desire above all: For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If, however, it is to live in the flesh and I am to live on here that means fruitful service for me; so I can say nothing as to my personal preference. But I am hard pressed between the two. My yearning desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far, far better; but to remain in my body is more needful and essential for your sake (Phil. 1:21-24).

The fate of men was at the hand of the devil when our parents sinned at the Garden of Eden. But when God came to the garden to deal with and rescue men, He promised Adam and Eve a Redeemer in the far future. He did not come in the lifetime of Adam, neither of Abraham's. Although, it was to Abraham that God confirmed His promise of salvation to men, by promising him that his Seed (YAHSHUA) will possess the gate of His enemies, and in his Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed and [by Him] bless themselves, because you have heard and obeyed My voice (Gen. 22:17 b-18). It was going to be through the seed of Abraham that the Redeemer was to come two thousand years later. From Adam to Abraham it was two thousand years; from Abraham to YAHSHUA two thousand years; from YAHSHUA to present it has been over two thousand years

ago. The unseen thing, the redemption of men came four thousand years later from Adam to Christ in the person of our Lord, YAHSHUA. Men of old, to whom the promise had been given, died without seeing it being fulfilled. YAHSHUA told the disciples, blessed are your eyes because they do see and your ears because they do hear. Truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous men yearned to see what you see, and did not see it and to hear what you hear, and did not hear (Matt. 13:16-17).

Indeed, what YAHSHUA told the disciples were profound. Those were men and women who were God's recipients of His promises. They heard directly from God, yet died without seeing the fulfillment. Isaiah prophesied concerning the coming of the Messiah, His sufferings, and death. He prophesied about the tribulation and the millennium kingdom, and the punishment of his nation. He understood all was to be fulfilled someday but died without seeing the fulfillment of all. The Prophet Daniel, at the end of chapter twelve of his book, when he was told about the final judgment through the great tribulation and the deliverance of his people, was also told to shut up the words and seal the Book until the time of the end... The angel also told him, go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end (Daniel 12:4,9). Peter, in his first letter, 1:10-12 confirms the fact by saying: the prophets, who prophesied of the grace which was intended for you, searched and inquired earnestly about this salvation. They sought to whom or when this was to come which the Spirit of Christ working within them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow [them]. It was then disclosed to them that the services they were rendering were not meant for themselves and their period of time, but for you.

Before His death, YAHSHUA promised the disciples to return to all believers in Him. Meantime, He comforted them with these words: Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe in Me also ... and when I go and make a place for you, I will come back again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also (John 14:1,3). It has been almost two thousand years that this promise continues, like some others, unseen and non-experienced. But God's word stands firm in heaven. Nothing will thwart His plan. The Apostle Paul admonished the Thessalonians, who were afraid they were in the tribulation, due to severe persecutions, to steadfastness and patience to wait for the return of Christ. He said, May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness and patience of Christ and in waiting for His return (II Thess. 3:5).

So my friends, as Peter said, I will say to you: brace up your minds; be sober; set your hope; wholly and unchangeably on the grace that is coming to you when YAHSHUA the Messiah is revealed. Live as children of obedience; do not conform yourselves to the evil desires in your former ignorance. But as the One Who is called you is holy, you yourselves also be holy in all your conduct and manner of living (I Peter 1: 13-15). In this manner of living, we will be ready when the unseen becomes visible; when the hoped-for becomes reality; when the corrupted is dressed with the uncorrupted and glorious body, to fulfill in all the believers the promises of redemption of long ago. He Who promised is faithful and utterly trustworthy, and He will also do it (I Thess. 5:24). Be comforted with these words.