

Characteristics of Hope

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An epistle centering around the superiority of Christ as our all-sufficient One would certainly be expected to contain a message of hope. While some had apparently given up Jesus as their hope (Hebrews 6:4-6), the writer of Hebrews had a higher estimation of those to whom he writes. For one thing, they had a legacy of good works and brotherly love and benevolence (6:10). His desire was that they would continue to stay strong. In expressing this, the writer suggests *hope* as an integral tool to keep them hanging onto their faith in Christ. In these final ten verses of Hebrews six, he mentions three qualities of hope that would help them – and will help us – hang onto our hope in Christ no matter what.

This hope is durable (11). Look at the language he uses. This hope was tied to an assurance that would endure “until the end.” It was a hope that would lead them to “inherit the promises” (12), just as Abraham’s hope in God led him to his inheritance (13-17). God desires to show us, as heirs of the promise through Christ, His unchanging purpose (17), so He guarantees that promise through an oath built upon the foundation of Himself. Hope which is guaranteed by the very nature and character of God is hope that will outlast anything! Nations rise and fall. Presidents serve only one or two terms.

Supreme court justices, at most, can serve only a lifetime. Our hope transcends time.

This hope is tangible (18). These Christians needed to count on a refuge in difficult times (see 12:4), and we desire the same thing in our lives! Knowing that God is so trustworthy, we are encouraged to “take hold of hope” that is found only in Christ. To say that we can take hold of hope and that it is set before us means that it has substance. In a world where nothing seems certain, evidence from scripture, nature, order and design of the universe, and so much more allows us, by faith, to grab this hope. He had already told them to hold onto that hope in Christ earlier in the letter (3:6) and to encourage this response he points them to scripture (cf. 3:7-11; Psa. 95:7-11). Scripture helps us see the solid hope we have in Jesus.

This hope is stable (19). It is an anchor. Anchors keep a vessel from drifting, an appropriate illustration since the Christians were tempted to drift from Christ (2:1). By maintaining their hope, they could anticipate three blessings: (1) sureness, (2) steadfastness, and (3) the service of the sacrificial Savior (19-20). All three of these descriptions of this Almighty anchor underline the security found in keeping ourselves anchored in Christ. Those who keep Jesus as their hope are able to weather the most horrific storms of life!

As Christians, we may find ourselves ready to abandon Jesus as our hope. So many things attempt to pull us from Him. Let us draw encouragement from this inspired writer, as surely these first Christians did, and rejoice in these changeless characteristics of hope!