

# The Hope That is In You

“Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.” (1Peter 3:15)

In past studies, we have emphasized the Christian’s need to apologize—give a systematic defense—for the hope within them. We have also looked at the existence of God as the reason a Christian can successfully give a defense. There is another component in the exhortation by Peter—the hope itself. What is the hope? Where does it come from? Can the grounds for the hope be used to further the systematic defense in faith?

## “Let Us Make Man in Our Image”

*“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness’ ... God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Genesis 1:26-28).* It is rightly noted that God is spirit and so to be in the image of God is to have that spiritual component. God gave man, not only breath, but spirit, or soul. Isaiah speaks of God who “created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread out the earth and its offspring, Who gives breath to the people on it And spirit to those who walk in it” (**Isaiah 42:5**). Solomon also notes that “the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it” (**Ecclesiastes 12:7**).

Being made in the image of God, having a soul, is not merely some superficial aspect of God’s creation. The meaning is profound. God also describes an outgrowth of this spiritual nature with which He supplied man: “He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end” (**Ecclesiastes 3:11**). God’s works are so overwhelming, that man will not find out everything He has done through our finite observations and ways of thinking. However, this also means that we have a knowledge, even a desire, for the things that we know are beyond our physical selves. We know that there is an antiquity and a futurity set in our hearts.

## “Let Them Rule”

Not only did God create man in His image, with the concept of eternity in his heart, but **He likewise created man to rule**. After creating male and female, God said, “*Let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.*” Then He addressed mankind, His creation: “*Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth*” (**Genesis 1:26-28**).

God’s word is clear. Man is not like the rest of God’s creation. He has a soul—a spiritual component after God’s image; he can reason and grasp the eternal spiritual nature; he is intended by God to rule.

The inspired Psalmist, David, also spoke of God giving man charge of His creation. “*When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained; What is man that You take thought of him, And the son of man that You care for him? Yet You have made him a little lower than God, And You crown him with glory and majesty! You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, All sheep and oxen, And also the beasts of the field, The birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, Whatever passes through the paths of the seas. O LORD, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth!*” (**Psalm 8:3-9**).

The Hebrew writer quotes a portion of **Psalm 8** and applies it to Jesus. The meaning is quite clear: God came to earth as man so that “*He might taste death for everyone*” (**Hebrews 2:7-9**). The writer also points out that by coming as a man, He “*has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin*” (**Hebrews 4:15**).

### **“We Will Also Reign with Him”**

John opens his gospel account by pointing out that God became flesh for His plan for our benefit. “*And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. John testified about Him and cried out, saying, ‘This was He of whom I said, He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’ For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ*” (**John 1:14-17**).

God, coming as man and taking the throne to rule, is the very basis of man’s hope. Peter spoke of the importance of this in his sermon recorded for us from the day of Pentecost. “*Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. And so, because he was a prophet and knew that GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT one OF HIS DESCENDANTS ON HIS THRONE, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY. This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear ... Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified*” (**Acts 2:29-36**).

The One on the throne has the full intention and expectation that those people who are His will reign with Him. He built man to rule. He planned that His people—those who are conformed to His image—would reign. “*It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him; If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself*” (**2Timothy 2:11-13**). Keep in your heart the final promise made at the close of the letters to the angels of the seven churches in Asia: “*He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne*” (**Revelation 3:21**).

This is the Christian’s hope and it is based on facts in evidence. Do you have this hope within you? Are you ready to give an account?