

# Hopeless

*"...without hope and without God in the world."  
Ephesians 2:12 (NIV)*

**I**t was a wonderful, but short lived, relationship. The doctor loved and owned quarter horses. My father, as a farmer, knew draft horses quite well. They bantered each other during his last two weeks in hospital. I recall having a consult with the doctor after my dad slipped into a coma. He gently and with some emotion explained that the end was hours away.

Perhaps that was one of my most painful experiences in life as I loved my father dearly and respected and admired him greatly. But his passing was bittersweet. How so? Bitter because our every other day phone calls, and many visits would be no more. Sweet because my father had endured much pain as the cancer migrated through his tired old body. So that ended with his death. Also, I had the glorious hope of reunion when it would be my turn to leave this world for my heavenly Father's home. Without that hope I would have been devastated!

As a pastor I have had a lot of experience trying to help people who have no hope. It is a heart wrenching time for me and after the funeral I just want to go home and retreat to my study, to be alone, to pray and sometimes weep.

Many brilliant minds have struggled with their hopeless view of the future. The late Bertrand Russell famously said, "that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar

system, and that the whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins – all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built."

Against the backdrop of Russell's dark view of the future we have the teaching of Scripture on a joyful future for all the people of God. Revelation 21:3-4 (NIV) reads, "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'"

Then in Revelation 22:17 (NIV) we read, "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let the one who hears say, 'Come!' Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life."

We are free to accept Russell's view of the future or we may listen to the Spirit and receive the free gift of eternal life. I have long ago been led by the Spirit to the foot of the cross where my heart was opened to receive the message of the truth of the Gospel. Dear reader consider well the wonderful message of the lowly Jesus and

seek Him while He can be found.

In evil long I took delight,  
Unawed by shame or fear,  
Till a new object struck my sight,  
And stopped my wild career.

I saw One hanging on a tree,  
In agony and blood,  
Who fixed His languid eyes on me,  
As near His cross I stood.

Sure, never to my latest breath,  
Can I forget that look;  
It seemed to charge me  
with His death,  
Though not a word He spoke.

My conscience felt  
and owned the guilt,  
And plunged me in despair,  
I saw my sins His blood had spilt,  
And helped to nail Him there.

A second look He gave,  
which said,  
"I freely all forgive;  
This blood is for thy ransom paid;  
I die that thou mayst live."

Thus, while His death  
my sin displays  
In all its blackest hue,  
Such is the mystery of grace,  
It seals my pardon too.

With pleasing grief  
and mournful joy,  
My spirit now is fill'd,  
That I should such a life destroy,  
Yet live by Him I kill'd.

-John Newton

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