

HOPE OF GLORY

When I was a little girl, my greatest – well, really my only – aspiration in life was to grow up to be like my Mom. I never wanted to be a doctor, lawyer, teacher, or nurse. I just wanted to be happily married, a good wife, and good mother to my children. And to a large extent, my hopes were realized. I am happily married; I try to be a good wife. And now that my children are grown and have "risen up and called me blessed," I guess I can say I was a good enough mother.

But back when I was a little girl, I didn't know what it took to have a good marriage or be a good wife and mother. I just liked what I saw modeled before me and knew I wanted that. My hope was somewhat veiled; I couldn't know how wonderful it felt to be married until it happened. I couldn't know what was involved in maintaining the marital relationship. I couldn't know the work and stress and pain involved in raising children until I did it. These things had to be revealed to me through my experience.

As I consider Paul's statement in Romans 5 that we "rejoice in the hope of the glory of God," I have to wonder what the Old Testament saints thought about the after-life. As much as it is veiled for us to know what it will be like to experience God's glory, it was even more veiled for them. The promise of a Redeemer was known from the time of the fall onward (Gen. 3:15). The suffering Job declared that he knew he would one day see his Redeemer with his own eyes (Job 19:25-27). David's poetry reveals his sure hope that Sheol, the place of the dead, was not the end (Ps. 16:10, 49:15).

I suppose they knew, as we do, that life in glory would mean realizing the full potential man was created with. God created humans in His own image and declared all his creation "very good." With God's image marred by sin, life became decidedly inglorious. How wonderfully gracious of God to give us Jesus Christ, His Perfect Example of how human life should be lived. That was a giant step forward in lifting the veil, but only the full implications of Jesus' death and resurrection could pull it away.

Jesus' death was our death; Jesus' resurrection is our resurrection. We demonstrate this symbolically when we are baptized. Just as Jesus took upon Himself our sin, He also put upon us the perfectly holy life He had lived. Because he overcame sin, its power in us was disabled. He gives us new life, His life within us, by giving us the Holy Spirit. He makes us part of His body; we are in Christ. All that He received as first-born from the dead and only begotten Son of God, we also will receive.

Did I say the veil was removed? I was wrong. I just wrote those words on the page and realize I still have no concept of what it will be like to live in glory with God. But it will not always be that way. "Now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully . . ." (I Cor. 13:12). Beloved, we *will* experience these things; our hopes will be realized. And it will be more and better than anything we could have hoped for in this life. That is something worth rejoicing over.