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Throughout the Bible, God communicated the truth of Christ's coming to encourage believers, especially during challenging times. Believers in the Old Testament looked forward to the first coming of their Messiah, the Christ, and to their future resurrection from the dead. Today born-again believers look forward to the gathering together, when Christ returns for his Church. At a future date *after* the gathering together, Old Testament believers and all unbelievers will be resurrected from the dead in the resurrections of the just and the unjust. God has always provided His believing people with hope to give them patient endurance to move forward in life.

Job was an Old Testament believer who suffered the loss of family members, illness, material losses, and friends who became miserable comforters in a most trying time. Yet he had patient endurance to move forward in life. What kept that man going? Job endured because he had a hope of his future resurrection from the dead.

Job 19:25-27:

For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.

Wow! What a revelation! Job knew that he would be raised from the dead and that in his resurrected body he would "see" God at the latter day in the resurrection of the just. Job's eyes were fixed on the goal of God's deliverance, which enabled him to endure.

James 5:11:

Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful [compassionate], and of tender mercy.

The word “patience” here can be translated “patient endurance.” Job patiently endured because he had a hope, and the Lord was able to bless him with more children and twice as many possessions as he had before! We in the Grace Administration also have a hope, the hope of Christ’s return. With the Hope, we can stay fixed on our goals, knowing that God is always able to provide what we need, even during any attack of the adversary. It pays to endure!

Today, the Hope provides us with a goal to remain faithful to live God’s Word until Christ returns to gather together the born-again believers. Athletes know that it takes training to endure and a goal to win. As spiritual athletes, we move toward the finish line of Christ’s return, knowing we receive rewards for our faithfulness to run the race of life.

Hebrews 12:1:

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience [patient endurance] the race that is set before us.

Running was one of the most popular sports in the Olympic Games at the time this epistle was written. The competitors would go through rigorous training and dieting to prepare for this event. They lost every ounce of weight they could and even put off clothing to avoid any possible hindrance. They had to know and abide by standards to qualify for the race. We too prepare—by putting on the Word of God, by putting off anything contrary to the Word of God, and by running with patience, or endurance, the spiritual race. Why? There’s a prize.

Philippians 3:14:

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

The word “mark” here means finish line, or goal. This goal keeps us moving forward with purpose. The finish line is the return of Christ, and the “prize” is the rewards we will receive for running the race and breaking the tape at the finish line.

Like Job, the Old Testament believers were able to endure by looking forward to their future resurrection. But before the resurrections of the just and the unjust occur, we will have been gathered together in Christ. Today we lay aside every weight, by getting rid of things that may hinder us in our walk with God, and run with patience the race that is set before us. Knowing the details in God's Word about the Hope provides us patient endurance to go the distance and receive the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

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