***Our Resurrection and the Restored Earth
RO113-02***

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This morning, we continue in Romans 8:22-25. Our subject is "Hope in the Future," segment number 5.

We have seen that the ultimate effect of sin upon mankind is the divine penalty of death. The curse of sin has turned the world, consequently, into one giant cemetery. Human beings, however, have devised numerous ways to cope with the fact of death from pretending that it doesn't exist to attempting to preserve the corpse. However, nothing eases the fear and the certainty of death in the human race. It is part of a curse that was brought down upon all of creation and upon all of mankind by the act of Adam in the Garden of Eden.

The born-again believer, however, has been released from the tyranny of death by the atonement and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is the pattern for the future resurrection of all believers. The characteristics of the risen body of the Lord will be reproduced in the Christian's body, and we've looked at many of the details of that. The Christian is not faced, therefore, with an endless series of endless reincarnations in various lifeforms, which is what Satan has offered people and which is widely accepted in the human race today. All believers, therefore, long for the day of the glorified body in the pattern of the man Jesus Christ who is now in heaven. Now, whatever happens to the Christian's body, it will someday be raised to life minus the sin nature. That is a reality, and that is a realistic hope.

**Salvation Through Grace, Not Works**

This morning, we begin Romans 8:24-25, where the Apostle says, "For we are saved by hope." He begins that Greek sentence with the word "for," which is the conjunction "gar." This word introduces a description of the Christian's attitude while he is waiting for that inevitable resurrection of the physical body.

He says, "We are saved." This is the Greek word "sozo." The word "sozo" in the Bible means deliverance from some kind of danger, deliverance from some kind of suffering. The word here refers to deliverance specifically from the wrath of God against sin and against eternal punishment in the lake of fire. In the Greek Bible, this is grammatically in the aorist tense, which in the Greek, refers to a point in time in the past when you realized that you have a moral problem with God which cannot be solved on your own, that you must be as good as Jesus Christ to go to heaven. The only way you can do that is by having that kind of righteousness imputed to your credit by God and you accepted it. So, we say, as the Bible says, you believed the Gospel.

This is furthermore in the passive voice. Every verb in the Greek language has a voice to tell us whether it is something that you do, as if it were active, or if it something that is done to you. This is very distinctly important that you understand when the Bible says, "We were saved," that is passive. It is something that you stood there and had done for you.

Most of the human race doesn't believe that. Most of the denominations of the world compromise on this point, and while they talk about the grace of God, will suddenly insert a human requirement or you don't get it. The Roman Catholic Church says if you don't deserve the salvation that Christ has provided, you won't get it. And so, first you must live the kind of a life that will enable you to merit the merit of Christ. There are other groups that say if you do not have water baptism inserted into the process of salvation - your doing - if you don't do your part, God's not going to do His part.

So, it's very important to realize that this is passive voice. The Greek Bible, because it was controlled in its original writing by God the Holy Spirit, is exactly, precisely true. Now, you'll never get that from English. Now if you know this and you look at this word here in Romans 8:24, it's an enormously important point, and you'll have to jot out a little note out in the margin of your Bible, put a letter "P" there to indicate whatever your code is for remembering that that's passive so that it reminds you that was done for you, not something that you did for yourself.

It's indicative mood, which is indicating that this is a statement of a basic Biblical truth. And what it is stating, of course, is that basic biblical truth which is said so well in Ephesians 2:8-9 where we read, "For by grace are ye saved through faith [grace means it's a gift given to you, not something you paid for and deserve]; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." Very distinctively declared: "not of works." So, Paul says, "For we are saved." It is very clear from this verse alone that salvation is provided by a work of God alone apart from human effort and therefore irreversible.

I want to reinforce that a little bit for you this morning. If you'll turn to Ephesians 2:5. You must remember that what you hear in the auditorium of Berean Church relative to the doctrine of salvation by the grace of God is not what is popularly accepted in the religious world today. While you get used to the fact and you say, "Yes, of course it's passive, of course God had to do it for us," that's not what most people say nor what the natural unbeliever, the natural unsaved man, he doesn't think that. The unsaved person always thinks he's got to do something to make it with God.

I want you to notice something in Ephesians 2:5. Verse 5 says, "Even when we were dead in sins, hath made us alive." We were spiritually dead in sins. That's how we're born, with that sin nature. "Hath made us spiritually alive together with Christ [That's at the point of salvation. Then he inserts how it happened.], (by grace ye are saved)." Here again, we have exactly the same word "sozo," but one thing that is different is that here, it is not the aorist, as we had here where he's just emphasizing that at some point action in the past when you made a decision, it adds another factor here, because this is the perfect tense.

Now, the perfect tense looks like this: it's a point where something begins and then the effects of what happened here continue here and here and right up to the present. Here we are this morning in church, and the effects continue. The perfect tense is an amazing tense in the Greek Bible, and here again, it is not without reason that God the Holy Spirit inserted the perfect tense, because it says, "You have been saved." And that's the way to translate this. "For by grace you have been saved." And what happened there at that point in the past when you accepted Christ also continues to the present, to the present, to the present, to the present. What does that mean? It goes on forever. There is never a time when you run out of that salvation once it is given to you.

Notice [Ephesians] 2:8, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." The verse we just read there, Romans 2:8, again, the same word there, "sozo," and again, in verse 8, "For by grace are ye saved." Perfect tense. Again, he is saying, "For by grace, you HAVE been saved," and the implication is you continue to this point as a saved person and will do so forever. Now, that is an amazing provision, and both these words here in Ephesians 2:5 and Ephesians 2:8 are also passive in the voice, so it's done for the sinner by God, not by the sinner for himself.

Here, the mood is what we call a participle because a spiritual principle on eternal security is being stated. The beauties of the language that God used to make it so clear and yet the resistance of the mind of man ignores it all. So, I stress to you that when the Apostle Paul here says in Romans 8:24, "For we are saved," he means we are saved once and for all. That is exactly what he means. Once saved, indeed always saved.

Now, you see the confusion that people have on that is they believe that, well you can go ahead and live like the devil then. Yeah, you can do that as a Christian, but all of you understand the doctrine of disciple, so you understand that you're not going to get away from that. And all of you understand that you can go so far as to be guilty of the sin unto death and the doctrine of death will come into effect. You are not going to get away with sinning in the family of God. That's a whole subject in itself.

The Bible teaches that once you are in the family of God, it's an irreversible relationship, and I think that's why Jesus explained eternal life to Nicodemus in terms of physical birth. He compared it to physical birth, because you cannot reverse a birth. Once you're born, you're born. Once you're born into a family, you are born into a family. Don't miss that. It was very significant that he used that analogy to stress that once you have been born into the family of God, it's like being born into a human family. You cannot reverse it.

So, Paul says, "We have been saved [permanently, once forever] by hope." "By" is not a good translation; it should be "in hope," not "by hope." The word hope is "elpis." The word "elpis" hope means confident expectation of something good. It never implies in the Bible an uncertain result or possible disappointment. The word "hope" in the Bible does not have the meaning that we have with the word hope, that we hope something's going to happen, but we're not sure if it will or not. When the Bible says that something is a hope, it means you're going to get it. It's a hope of reality.

And so, he says that here is something that we were saved but that we were saved under the condition of a great hope. And in the Greek Bible, I can tell you this that this is the word that stands first in the sentence. And when you do that in the Greek Bible, that is the word of emphasis. That is the word it wants to stress as being important. You can shuffle the words around and put up front what you want to stress. So, it's interesting. Here, this word is up front indicating that this is the emphasis that God the Holy Spirit wants to make: we have been saved in hope.

And furthermore, it says, "THE hope," in the Greek Bible. It has the word "the" in front of it because it refers to a specific hope which is discussed in the context. What is that? Well, obviously, the hope that he's discussed in the immediate context is the redemption of the body, that is, the resurrection of the Christian's body. So, actually, we can translate it as "this hope." The word "hope" is actually in a grammatical structure that expresses the circumstances in which salvation is secured. It does not express the means by which salvation is secured.

And that's why we say, "We are saved by hope," is a bad translation, because it sounds like it's saying that you can get saved if you hope so. How many times have you asked somebody, "Are you going to heaven?" "Oh, I hope so!" "You got a verse in the Bible that says you can be saved by hope?" "Yeah, here it is, Romans 8:24, 'For we are saved by hope so.'" There it is. You see, that's a bad translation, because it's a totally wrong idea, and unless you go back to the Greek language in here and see what it grammatically says, you will realize that this is wrong. Newer translations spotted that, and they corrected it.

It is not that this is the means by which we are saved. We are saved as the result of doing nothing but believing God. We have been saved, however, in a circumstance where when we are saved, we enter a condition of enormous hope, of enormous anticipation and expectation in the future that we are going to realize. What a great provision.

So, we translate this as "in hope," and those who foolishly think they can hope to be saved without trusting in Christ as Savior are doomed to hell. And that's why, if somebody says to you, "Well, I hope to go to heaven," you can almost with a certainty tell that person, "In all likelihood, you are not, because if you understood the conditions of eternal life, you would know that it does not have any uncertainty involved. If you accept God's offer, you're in. And to say, 'I hope so' shows that you are thinking of gaining it upon something that you must do. You're hoping that you'll be good enough, that you'll be proved worthy, as the Mormons say, that you'll rise to a certain standard and then you'll be in. We Christians are saved by our past act of faith in Jesus Christ. But what we now hope for is relative to our future resurrection. So, he says we have been saved by that act of faith in the past, but we have been saved within the context of a great hope concerning our future which touches many areas.

So, we would translate this in this way: "For in this hope, we have been saved." Paul refers to the hope of freedom from the effects of sin on man. Christians are positionally, of course, already released from the curse of eternal death, but we are looking forward to the hope of being release from the curse of sin in actual experience. That's what the resurrection does for us. And that's what he says: "Yes, we have now positionally be released from sin, but we don't have it in our experience." So, we are saved with the hope of having in our experience what we now have in our position. For in this hope, we have been saved.

**The Expectation of Our Resurrection and the Restored Earth**

He goes on to say, "But, hope that is seen is not hope." The word "but" is this word "de," which introduces a contrast. The word "seen" is the Greek is the word "blepo." "Blepo" refers to a person who focuses attention upon a specific object. It isn't an overview, panoramic view; it's looking specifically at something. And he says for we in a very specific way are looking upon a specific object. What is it? Again, what he's talking about here: resurrection phase of salvation. Present tense: we constantly look at resurrection. Passive: our hope is viewed as something that we have. It is something that God has given to us, not that we created. It's a spiritual principle. He says that hope, this earnest expectation that is seen, that we focus upon, and we can actually look at it, is not hope. And he uses the strong negative "ou," definitely not.

What one already possesses or can see is obviously not a future hope. If you would like to have a new car, you cannot be hoping for a new car if you already have it, because now you can go out there and focus your attention and see it. That is not hope. That is not an expectation. Hope does not deal with a present possession but with a future reality. It is the essence of hope as a matter of fact that it looks not at things that are seen but at things that are not seen. That is stated for us, for example, in Hebrews 11:1, it says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It is in the nature of hope that you look at something that you do not see. So, we would translate this as, "For in this hope, we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope."

Paul goes on and makes a very logical statement that follows from this. "For what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for it?" If you see something, for what one sees, why do you also hope for it? And here again, we have the word "hope." It's the verb here, "elpizo," for future anticipation. So, we translate, "For why does one also hope for what he sees?" If we see a thing, we do not hope that it will come about. What would be the point? When the hoped for is attained, it ceases to be a hope.

So, verse 24 makes this logical summary: "For in this hope, we have been saved, [permanently and forever]: but hope that is seen is not hope." We're not looking at something that we have. We don't have resurrection bodies. Therefore, we have a hope for something that we do not have, and it's a certainty. For in this hope, we have been saved: but hope that is seen is not hope: for why does one hope for what he sees?" Yes, we're going to have something better.

But verse 25 says, "But if we hope for that we see not." And here again, he uses this same word, hope, "elpizo," the verb form of hope. "If we hope [constantly hope, personally, actively hope] for that [which is not that which] we [definitely do] not see [Here's the same word "blepo" that we had again, seeing in a specific focus, personally, constantly viewing this.], then do we with patience wait for it." The word "with" here is actually the preposition "dia," and it means, "by means of." "Then do we [by means of] patience wait for it."

The word "hupomone." This word means "to abide under," and so we translate it as a persevering endurance. It is a spirit of waiting it out until our hoped-for expectation is fulfilled. We don't give up. When people are impatient with their circumstances in life, when people are impatient with what is happening to them, when people are impatient with what God has brought into their lives, it is a subtle way of declaring your own arrogance, and you should be aware of that because you are telling God you just don't like the way He is running things.

When things don't jell together for you, when the circumstances are bad, you become impatient, and you start exercising self-pity and grumbling and carrying on the way Israel did in the wilderness because they didn't like the way God was running things. And you want to think to yourself whether you are really that big-time yet that you're ready to square-off with God and express your impatience with His judgment and with His dealings. And don't forget: He is still on the throne. Nothing happens without His authorization and permission. It indicates dissatisfaction with God's performance. You want His schedule to chain to your schedule. But, if we have a godly understanding of hope relative to all the implications of our resurrection and the future that we have then, then we will wait for.

And here, we have that same descriptive word again that we've had several times: "apekdechomai." Stretching your neck out, looking down the road in anticipation of what is coming. Present tense, constantly looking down the road. This is middle in form in the language, but it's active in meaning. You personally are doing the looking. It's a statement of fact.

So, we Christians are doing what? We're looking for the arrival of a reality, a reality that we patiently wait for every day. And what are we trying to do? We're looking forward to the day when we have no hope. That's what every Christian is looking forward to: the day when he has no hope, when instead of hope, he's got the reality fulfilled. We are looking forward to the day when we don't have to hope anymore. And, as we think about it, there are so many things that are in that category of reality.

We all look for the reality that we now hope for of being in heaven with Jesus Christ. Actually being there. Actually being on the scene like see John in the book of the Revelation, being up there actually on the scene. We hope for that reality of a world which is governed by divine viewpoint principles where biblical righteousness and justice reigns. We look forward to that kind of a world where God's righteousness and His justice reign supreme in the nations of the world. The reality of possessing and enjoying the rewards that we have earned with our Christian service.

Do not make the mistake that God is in the business of promoting equality. God is not in the business of promoting equality. He is in the business of promoting freedom, and He is in the business of exercising justice. And you may rest assured that you will not all be equal in terms of what you are enjoying in heaven. It is directly connected to your performance now. The reality of seeing a Bible which is totally vindicated in the world and its knowledge is possessed by all the people of the world.

We look forward to that kind of a world. We look forward to the reality of genuinely being able to love God and to love our neighbors as we do ourselves. We look forward to the reality of seeing government fulfill its divine role of being an umpire rather than a player on the field. The reality of human sexuality functioning within God's parameters as a noble act instead of a degraded act. The reality of public entertainment which ennobles and do not corrupt, embarrass, and cheapen the viewer. We look forward to the reality of protecting the life of the unborn child simply because he is destined by God for humanity.

We look forward to the reality of the destruction of nations which oppose and blaspheme God and deny His existence and His sovereign authority. We look forward to those nations getting what they deserve. We look forward to the reality of maximum, good mental and physical health all the time, all the time with no death ahead. The reality of divine judgment of evil rulers upon the nations. Those who are the high and the mighty today, who are the evil and the corrupt.

We look forward to the reality of personal sinlessness when we no longer contend with the sin nature. We look to the reality of the termination of the evildoers, the mafia-type in society who prey on the weak and the helpless. We look forward to the reality of the world of peace with no standing armies and no aggression anywhere. We look to the reality of education which begins with God as the frame of reference of all truth. We look to the reality of a secure freedom from economic tyranny.

We could go on and on. We have hope, and hope which we have not realized, but which is someday going to become reality. It's all associated with when we get those resurrection bodies; all of these things are going to become reality as well.

**Positive Thinking and Visualization**

Now, mankind, sadly enough, has sought to fulfill and is seeking to fulfill its hopes for these realities apart from the power of God and His Word. You will remember that Satan from the time of the Garden of Eden has been telling people that they have untapped powers within themselves. This is a very popular idea today. Corporations are sending vast sums of money to train their employees in the concept that they have vast, untapped powers within themselves, particularly in their mental capacity, powers which indeed are openly declared to be that of the divine. So that, many human systems of religion have been created by Satan to seek to lead their devotees into realizing their godhood with inherent powers, the concept that man is a god.

There are now millions upon millions upon millions of Americans who take seriously the idea that they have potential deity within them. There was a time that we laughed at that. There was a time when we said, "That's the kind of nonsense you'll find in India, but you won't find that sort of thing in a Christian country." But it's here now. Supernatural powers are now being attributed to the mind of man which it has claimed can change external reality and can secure our hopes.

"So, while we," Paul says, "with patience, dogged endurance, waiting upon God to come through for us in all of these things, with all these hopes, there is a world rising around us which is building a whole concept that these things can be realized now by the sheer capacity that man has within himself. The demon spirits of Satan lend their great powers to those seeking to function as gods in order to deceive them about their mind power.

What do you think is so popular of Bhagwan Rajneesh that you've been hearing about in the news? Have you watched those people in their adulation and adoration and their obsession with him? You look at this character, this mangy-looking creature, this creature of fallen sin, and they can hardly restrain themselves with ecstasy just to touch him. What do you think is going on? What do you think they see in him? Unless you understand what it is they see, you won't understand what's going on in the country today. This is what we're talking about. These people have hopes. Many of these hopes that we have read this morning, and others of that nature, they have hopes, and they see these hopes being realized by powers that can be released within the mind of man, within man's capacities, because he is basically a deity.

And they look at the Bhagwan, and they see this man as having risen toward the expression of that divine power that they hope to achieve. That's why they're excited. That's why they clap their hands. That's why they dance in his presence. Because they look upon him as the one who is an example to where they may rise. That's why they put their hands together, like this, and they bow. Do you know what that means? "I worship your deity. I worship your deity." That's what they're saying.

So, the next time you see him on television, in one of his ninety-eight Rolls-Royces. Why does he have ninety-eight? When he was being interviewed one time, the interviewer said one time, "I understand that you have ninety-four Rolls-Royces," and he says, "No, that is not true. I have ninety-eight." [Laughter.] His followers all laughed and clapped their hands. Why are they so excited about that? Because this is a demonstration where mind has been powerful over matter to such a degree that it was able to bring into his possession ninety-eight Rolls-Royces. And when his followers look at him, they see themselves in the potential of being able to do the same thing.

Now, that, folks, is heady, heady stuff. That is seeking to achieve hopes not by the patient waiting and endurance that Paul speaks about, that waits upon God and His order to bring about His program, but man and His capacity making the changes in his reality. These systems of mind power are described by code words that you will recognize such as "positive thinking" or "possibility thinking." These systems are widely promoted as biblical concepts by popular preachers, and so they are dignified in the eyes of the general public, including the Christian public, because they are promoted by popular preachers.

Great optimism also characterizes those who believe in the power of mind over matter. Don't forget that. Optimism: that is the key word. Not pessimism, but great optimism. Our optimism as Christians lies not in anything that we can achieve or in the future of the world. Our optimism lies in God. Our hope is in Him. Our hope is in this one Who has made us, Who has the power to change it all and Who will change it all. This basic teaching of possibility and positive thinking is simply an expression of New Age movement thinking which also basically seeks to create a utopia on earth via the concept of the godhood of man.

Now, deception is very, very subtle. For this reason that the very preachers who are teaching this are people from whom you will learn a great deal of sound, Bible truth. You will learn a great deal of sound, biblical principles. That is the problem. In the mask of true teaching there is hidden the heresy of the capacity of man to bring about success if he has a right mental attitude. Sometimes, these people even preach the gospel but in the midst of all they preach is the deadly seed.

It is like, as if we were to have a slice of bread that had been baked here. Here's this beautiful slice of bread. You can see this delicious aroma that is rising from it here, and it is wonderful texture. It is exciting. You can just hardly wait to get your hands on it, but right here in the middle is a small, solid speck of cyanide.

Is there any problem with this delicious piece of bread? You say, "Of course not," and so, you come here, and you bite a chunk out of here, and it's gone, and you say, "It's delicious!" And then you say, "I'll work on this corner here," and you bite a chunk out here, and it's delicious. And you perhaps have put a little butter and a jam on it to make it even better. And is there any problem with that? Of course not.

So, you take a really good chunk this time, and now you've got it down there, you see your teeth aren't in good condition, so it's jagged as you bite it there, but there it is. Wonderful! And so, you take another good bite out here and, "See, nothing happens." And then you take a real good crunch. And there you are holding your lily because you bit the cyanide, and you hit the dust.

Was there anything wrong with that wonderful, delicious, marvelous piece of bread? No. Just the piece of cyanide. And you know, when you take cyanide, it is, "Bingo, bango, goodbye, Charlie" time, just like that. It isn't sitting around thinking about what you're going to do next and letting the thing take effect like Excedrin headache that's this big. You wish it would get gone. I mean, when you've bitten it, that's it.

And that's what's happening in this positive thinking, the possibility thinking today, surrounded and promoted by popular preachers surrounding this evil heresy and misconception by a lot of sound and true doctrine. The most widely acclaimed preachers today, I can tell you, with the largest following are among the deceivers of Satan, and most are doing it in all sincerity because they have picked up a concept from the world that they have not checked out with the scripture. If you just have a mental attitude, you can bring things about.

You see, the exaltation of man as potential deity is in direct contrast to the teachings of scripture. The Bible tells us that man was created in God's image and His likeness. That's what Genesis 1:27 tells us. It does not tell us that man was made as exact duplicate of God. And that's what this positive thinking, possibility thinking is telling us. If man was made as an exact duplicate of God, then he can bring things about by his thinking, by his word the way God does.

And, we are indeed told that this was the method to use to stand up before your mirror and say, "I am an exact copy of God. I am God. I am God." And keep saying it until you get the exhilarating conviction that you are deity. Now when you have that, you see, you have power in words and power in your thoughts, because that's what God has. The Bible does not indicate that. The Bible tell us that man is a sinful creature and who is by nature depraved and not divine.

[Ephesians] 2:2-3 make that very clear, "Which in times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our manner of life [we who are now saved] in times past in the lusts of our flesh [the sin nature], fulfilling the desires of the sin nature and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." That's what we are. We're not gods, holy gods. We're creatures of sin.

The Bible therefore warns us in Romans 12:3 that we should not think of ourselves more highly than what we really are. We should not think of ourselves as more highly than that which is really true of us. And I want you to notice something. Romans 12:3 says, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

But notice what verse 2 says. Having told us in verse 3, "Don't think of yourself more highly than you should. Don't think of yourself as anything but a sinner saved by grace. Don't think of yourself except as a human that has been made in the image of God but not a duplication of God," verse 2 tells us how we are going to be able to maintain a balanced view of ourselves.

For, in verse 2, he says, "And be not conformed to this world [and the Greek language means "don't cut out the pattern of your life like a woman cuts out a pattern for a dress, don't cut out the pattern of your life according to what the world thinks and does]: but be ye transformed [how?] by the renewing of your mind [How do you renew your mind from human viewpoint to divine viewpoint? With the intake of the doctrines of scripture.], that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

So, it is very clear that the way we handle our misconceptions is through the doctrines of scripture. So, it is clear that man is, by nature, not a god. He does not possess mental powers to enforce His will on people and on matter. You can't make people want to do what you want to do just because you think them into doing what you want them to do. Christians are to, as a matter of fact, look to God to exalt them, rather than they exalting themselves, 1 Peter 5:6 tell us.

But today, you should be aware that Christians are being barraged with self-help methods to achieve esteem, to success, to achieve whatever it is you want in life. You can go to people and pay them to teach you how, through capacities within yourself, you will achieve these successful objectives. Man apart from regeneration through Jesus Christ has nothing to esteem in himself. People are told to get a good self-image. You know what you are, you won't have any misconceptions about your image. People are being encouraged to view themselves in a way that the Bible does not tell them to view themselves.

The Bible reveals that those who live a godly life who proclaim the scriptures who view themselves as those who have been saved by the grace of God are going to be persecuted by society, not honored. 2 Timothy 3:12 makes that clear. The powers of godhood in man are viewed as enabling him to use his mind to create what he wants. That's what positive thinking is all about.

And how do you do that? Well, you visualize your hopes to achieve them. Paul says, "We wait patiently for God to achieve our hopes." "No, you visualize them. You've got the power to do it." Now, of course, when I saw that, you understand I'm not talking about your visualizing something in order to plan a course of action. If you're going to build a house, you, naturally, an architect has to visualize it. But he doesn't bring that house into being by his visualization. They got to get out there, dig the hole, put the concrete in, set the form, put the lumber in, build the thing, follow the plan.

It does not mean that you're planning a camping trip. I always visualize a camping trip that we are planning when it's my responsibility. I sit down eventually, and I go through in my mind, from the start that the bus leaves this parking lot through all the stages and all the steps of what you are going to do. But then, I have to go out and get the tents, and I have to go out and get the food, and I have to get the iceboxes, and I have to check out the landers. My visualizing doesn't do that.

It's not like preparing a meal that you're cooking at home that you're planning for some guests you're going to have, visualizing the stages and the steps you're going to do. You still have to cook it and prepare it. It refers to using mental images to cause the house to just pop into existence, to cause somebody to give you money, to cause somebody to appease some desire that you have. Our hope for happiness, health, and success cannot be realized by mind power visualizing those things.

The medical world is trying that because, you see, this is witchcraft. This is the occult that's now entered science. And people who are desperately sick, the medical world will say, "Well, let's try a little witchcraft." And you might want to be aware of that. They won't call it "witchcraft," they say, "biofeedback." What are they telling you? They're telling you that you have within yourself the great powers of deity.

If you just imagine the particular organ in your body that is diseased as well, you will bring about healing. You can't even give serious thought to that unless you think that you are God, or unless you're so disoriented that you don't know what's going on. What is being passed off today as mind-power in man is in fact the working of occult powers.

This is not faith in God exercised in God on the principles of Bible doctrine and prayer to achieve one's hopes. This is an imagined power in man's subconsciousness which is directed to God to force God to do what we want by believing He will do it. Do you realize what you're doing? You're forcing God to knuckle under to you. That's what you think you're doing.

The charismatics do this all the time. They're told, "Just believe you are going to be healed," and then you will have performed the ritual that will force God to do what you think He will do what you want. And so, you don't have a sovereign God but only sovereign man who manipulates God by faith, by words, by rituals, and that, folks, is sorcery - nothing else. The same principle which is used throughout the charismatic world, and Satan obliges.

You go ahead and pursue positive thinking. The devil will give you results. But he's going to exact the payment from you. Don't forget that. You're not going to get it for nothing. He'll give you your results, and you'll pay for it down the line. The charismatics get their results, and they pay for it down the line.

The end time is going to be a society and the tribulation that admires the antichrist the way the Bhagwan is admired. For what reason? Because 2 Thessalonians tells us that this man will portray himself as God. And everybody will look at him, and they will see him exercising such powers, and he will be exercising those powers by his thinking and by his word, and the occult world of Satan will be behind him bringing the things that he thinks and says into reality. And the Bible tells us that people will believe the lie. What lie? That the antichrist is divine. And he is the great example of what all the rest of us can become.

How much better to turn your eyes upon Jesus with the hope that you will realize of becoming like Him but still remembering your place as a sinner saved by grace.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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