

# HOPE

THE BEST IS **YET TO COME**

BRYSON SMITH

Guidebooks for Life



As Christians, we have been called to a great and eternal hope—a wonderful, vibrant picture of the future God has in store for us.

But how do we think about that hope? What exactly is it? And how does it affect our lives *here and now*?

With insight and humour, Bryson Smith unpacks what the Bible has to say about hope—what it is (and isn't), and how it comforts, challenges and directs us in our day-to-day lives as Christians.

As we explore these great truths, we'll discover how important it is to keep our hope at the forefront of our minds, as we live for the wonderful day when Jesus returns and our hope becomes reality.

### About the author



**Bryson Smith** is part of the ministry team at Dubbo Presbyterian Church in rural NSW, Australia. He is also the author of *Faith* (a sister book to this one) and several of Matthias Media's Interactive Bible Studies. Bryson is married to Sue, and they have three adult children. He never ceases to be amazed by God's extraordinary grace in safeguarding a glorious and imperishable hope that is his in Jesus.

 matthiasmedia

ISBN 978-1-922206-97-8



9 781922 206978

# HOPE

THE BEST IS **YET TO COME**

BRYSON SMITH

## **Guidebooks for Life**



Bible-based essentials

for your Christian journey

*Hope* is part of a series of straightforward, practical Christian books from Matthias Media which deal with the important nuts-and-bolts topics that Christians need to know about as we walk each day with our Master.

Some Christian books are all theory and no practical application; others are all stories and tips with no substance. The Guidebooks for Life aim to achieve a vital balance—that is, to dig into the Bible and discover what God is telling us there, as well as applying that truth to our daily Christian lives.

For up-to-date information about the latest Guidebooks for Life, visit our website:

[www.matthiasmedia.com/gfl](http://www.matthiasmedia.com/gfl)

Guidebooks for Life



# HOPE

THE BEST IS **YET TO COME**

BRYSON SMITH



matthiasmedia

SYDNEY • YOUNGSTOWN

*Hope*

© Bryson Smith 2016

All rights reserved. Except as may be permitted by the Copyright Act, no part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means without prior permission from the publisher. Please direct all copyright enquiries and permission requests to the publisher.

Matthias Media

(St Matthias Press Ltd ACN 067 558 365)

Email: [info@matthiasmedia.com.au](mailto:info@matthiasmedia.com.au)

Internet: [www.matthiasmedia.com.au](http://www.matthiasmedia.com.au)

Please visit our website for current postal and telephone contact information.

Matthias Media (USA)

Email: [sales@matthiasmedia.com](mailto:sales@matthiasmedia.com)

Internet: [www.matthiasmedia.com](http://www.matthiasmedia.com)

Please visit our website for current postal and telephone contact information.

Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

ISBN 978 1 922206 97 8

Cover design and typesetting by Lankshear Design.

For Sue,  
an exquisite partner in marriage, ministry and life.

# CONTENTS

1. The hope to which he has called you	11
2. The hope of Israel	15
3. A better hope	29
4. Christ-centred hope	41
5. Resurrection hope	55
6. The fulfilment of hope	69
7. Waiting for hope	81
8. The comfort of hope	103
9. Rejoicing in hope	121
10. The helmet of hope	127
Appendix 1. Revelation	131
Appendix 2. Discussion guide	143



## Chapter 1

# THE HOPE TO WHICH HE HAS CALLED YOU

I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you... (Eph 1:16-18)

**WE'VE ALL HEARD THEM.** Stories about people who made bad decisions because they misjudged the future. People like the actor Gary Cooper, who turned down the role of Rhett Butler in *Gone with the Wind* because he thought the movie would be a flop. Or the Decca recording company, who refused to sign a recording contract with The Beatles because they thought guitar



music was going out of fashion. Or Harry Warner from Warner Bros, who rejected the idea of adding sound to their movies because in his opinion, “Who the hell wants to hear actors talk?”

These turned out to be really bad decisions because people miscalculated what was going to happen. Their false impression of the *future* meant they made foolish choices in the *present*. Maybe you’ve had a similar experience. It happens to me every time I go grocery shopping. I arrive at the check-out lanes and carefully assess the two critical factors of which queue is the shortest *and* which queue is moving the fastest. With deft insight I weigh up the options and join the line that I think will get me out of the supermarket the quickest. I am always wrong. How am I to know the person in front is going to need a price check on sardines, or that the person in front of them is going to need home delivery and therefore every single one of their 47 bags requires a handwritten sticker on it?!

It’s hard trying to see what the future will hold. Hindsight really *is* a wonderful thing.

God doesn’t want his people to have to guess about the future—he is far too loving for that. Mind you, that’s not to say God promises to tell us *everything* about the future. For example, nowhere in the Bible does God tell us which supermarket lane to choose. Trust me, I’ve looked. Nevertheless, God does tell us quite a lot of other things about the future. Important things. Exciting things. Indeed, it turns out God’s people can be very positive about the future, because God repeatedly states



that a time is coming when *everything* will be perfect for us. There may be trials and difficulties along the way for now—but ultimately, we can look forward to a time of endless goodness. No matter how bleak life may or may not seem at the moment, we can be confident that the best is yet to come.

In the Bible this positive conviction about the future is called ‘hope’, and it is an essential aspect of being a Christian. We are encouraged to “hold fast the confession of our hope” (Heb 10:23), to be ready to provide reasons for our hope (1 Pet 3:15), and to be earnest in having full assurance of hope (Heb 6:11). Hope is described as “a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul” (Heb 6:19) and a reason for solidarity with other Christians (Eph 4:4); and, together with faith and love, it is one of the defining aspects of Christian living (1 Cor 13:13; Col 1:5; 1 Thess 1:3). It’s no wonder, then, that the apostle Paul unceasingly prays that the Ephesian Christians may know the hope to which God has called them (Eph 1:16-18).

In this little book, we want to consider what exactly is the hope to which God’s people have been called. What sort of future does God have in store for us? Why can we be so confident about it? Why is it so good? And, importantly, how best should we be living *now* in light of our God-given future?

As you read this book, it’ll be like watching a photograph slowly developing before your eyes. I realize that photography nowadays is a very instantaneous thing. You click the button on your phone or digital camera and you can see the photo straight away. But



I'm so old that I can actually remember cameras when they used to have film! Back in those olden days I was even in a photographic club where we would develop our own photos. We would use the negatives from the film to expose special photographic paper to light, drop the exposed paper into a bath of developing solution, and then slosh it around until the photo developed. At first the photo was very faint and you could barely see it, but slowly and surely it would get clearer and clearer and clearer until finally, almost magically, a crisp, detailed photo would appear! (Well, at least other people's photos were crisp and detailed.)

Reading this book will be like watching a photo of 'hope' develop. As each chapter goes by we'll slosh the topic of hope around in the verses of the Bible, until finally we'll end up with a wonderful, vibrant picture of the future God has in store for us. It's a picture that will excite you, comfort you and spur you on in your loyalty to Jesus Christ. After all, who in their right mind would not sign The Beatles for a recording contract if they knew in advance the number of recordings the group would go on to sell? Likewise, who in their right mind would not do everything possible to stay loyal to Jesus Christ, knowing in advance the hope that awaits his followers?

