



(written in response to the request of a young lady named, Sue Ellen)

**F**OR men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. *17* Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: *18* That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: *19* Which **HOPE WE HAVE AS AN ANCHOR TO THE SOUL**, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; *20* Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. (Heb 6:16-20)

Today's devotion relates more to a spiritual song more than it does a hymn. Though it does not specifically make reference to a precise Bible verse, as a classical hymn would do, it nonetheless alludes to beautiful promises related in Holy Scripture with sentimental devotion. Therefore, I would relegate this song to that referred to in Ephesians 5:19 as a 'spiritual song' intended to lift our spirits with hope and joy: *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; 20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Eph 5:18-20 (KJV) We may wisely deduce many great spiritual truths if we use eyes and ears of spiritual discernment in studying this song.

## Living Hope

Songwriters: Phil Wickham / Brian Mark Johnson  
Living Hope lyrics © Essential Music

How great the chasm that lay between us  
How high the mountain I could not climb  
In desperation, I turned to heaven  
And spoke Your name into the night  
Then through the darkness, Your loving-kindness  
Tore through the shadows of my soul  
The work is finished, the end is written  
Jesus Christ, my living hope

Who could imagine so great a mercy?  
What heart could fathom such boundless grace?  
The God of ages stepped down from glory  
To wear my sin and bear my shame  
The cross has spoken, I am forgiven  
The King of kings calls me His own  
Beautiful Savior, I'm Yours forever  
Jesus Christ, my living hope

Hallelujah, praise the One who set me free  
Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me  
You have broken every chain  
There's salvation in Your name  
Jesus Christ, my living hope

Hallelujah, praise the One who set me free  
Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me  
You have broken every chain  
There's salvation in Your name  
Jesus Christ, my living hope

Then came the morning that sealed the promise  
Your buried body began to breathe  
Out of the silence, the Roaring Lion  
Declared the grave has no claim on me  
Then came the morning that sealed the promise  
Your buried body began to breathe  
Out of the silence, the Roaring Lion  
Declared the grave has no claim on me  
Jesus, Yours is the victory, whoa!

Hallelujah, praise the One who set me free  
Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me  
You have broken every chain  
There's salvation in Your name  
Jesus Christ, my living hope

Hallelujah, praise the One who set me free  
Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me  
You have broken every chain  
There's salvation in Your name  
Jesus Christ, my living hope

Jesus Christ, my living hope

Oh God, You are my living hope

*How great the chasm that lay between us How high the mountain I could not climb In desperation, I turned to heaven And spoke Your name into the night Then through the darkness, Your loving-kindness Tore through the shadows of my soul The work is finished, the end is written Jesus Christ, my living hope.* This stanza pays tribute to the God that is *Higher than I*. A peasant does not bargain with a Sovereign over matters of justice, and we do not bargain with God over our sins. He is Sovereign over all, and our salvation is granted as a matter of free grace. *But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.* Romans 5:15 (KJV) We must recognize that the Mountain of the Lord cannot be scaled by one whose burden of sin disqualifies him for the climbing; however, there were two Mountains of the Lord named in Scripture at which Moses talked with the Lord – and these two are related. Mt. Sinai is the Mountain of the Law, and Mount Horeb is the Mountain of Mercy. In actuality, these two are the same.. The Rock of Living Waters was struck by Moses at Mount Hored. By the Law, we are not entitled to climb the heights of Sinai; but by virtue of Mercy and Grace, we are enabled to make our petitions directly to God through our Advocate – the Lord Jesus Christ. We not only confer with the Lord during long, dark nights of the soul, but we are even given songs of praise to Him: *I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search.* (Psalm 77:6) The Light of Christ shines through the darkest corridors of our earthly walk and gives the sure hope of redemption to all who believe. *Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night.* (Job 35:10) Woe, He is right beside thee.

*Who could imagine so great a mercy? What heart could fathom such boundless grace? The God of ages stepped down from glory To wear my sin and bear my shame The cross has spoken, I am forgiven The King of kings calls me His own Beautiful Savior, I'm Yours forever Jesus Christ, my living hope.* In truth, the mercy of God toward the sinner is far beyond our finding out. It makes no sense in the human manner of reasoning. Why would the great Sovereign of the Universe send His only Begotten Son to die in the stead of those His enemies who hate Him? That grace is enshrined in a great peace of the soul that eludes the blind and lost: *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.* (Phil 4:7) Jesus bore our shame, humility, and suffering on the cross – a penalty that was rightfully ours; yet, the completely innocent and unblemished One suffered for all who should rightfully have borne the penalty. But let us not forget that we, too, have a cross to bear in following our Lord. We must also suffer death of self, self-sacrifice, deference to others, and suffer even false accusations just as our Lord has done for us. Though our Lord was not of any particular exception in physical beauty to all of mankind, He was like that Tabernacle of the Wilderness whose walls were adorned with silken drapes, colored wools, and even gold plating. The Tabernacle was beautiful when viewed from its interior; but outside, it was covered with uncomely goat hair. Christ is Beautiful for the Beauty of His Heart – His sacrifice, and His redemption for us. *For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. 3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.* (Isaiah 53:2-3)

*Hallelujah, praise the One who set me free Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me You have broken every chain There's salvation in Your name Jesus Christ, my living hope Hallelujah, praise the One who set me free Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me You have broken every chain There's salvation in Your name Jesus Christ, my living hope.* Hallelujah (Alleluia) means 'Praise Ye the Lord' and that is the bounden duty of the

Elect. There is no true death to those who are the saved of the Lord. *I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?* (John 11:25-26) There are two profound truths in this quoted text:

- 1) All who leave this earthly life in faith do not truly die, but live on;
- 2) We must believe while we yet live for there is no salvation in the grave.

So, death has no grip on the Elect of God – *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* (1 Cor 15:55-57)

*Then came the morning that sealed the promise Your buried body began to breathe Out of the silence, the Roaring Lion Declared the grave has no claim on me Then came the morning that sealed the promise Your buried body began to breathe Out of the silence, the Roaring Lion Declared the grave has no claim on me Jesus, Yours is the victory, whoa!* That early morning referred to was the same at which the blessed Mary Magdalene came to the tomb while it was yet dark and wept without. She came seeking only the dead body of her beloved Savior, but instead found the living Lord. Blinded by profuse tears, she mistook Him for the Gardener until He spoke her name with the same force with which He had called her brother, Lazarus, from the stone-cold tomb. That morning changed EVERYTHING FOR HER AND FOR US! Because the Resurrection of our Lord defeated death and Hell, so are we privileged to be granted the same blessing by way of the free grace offered in Christ.

*Hallelujah, praise the One who set me free Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me You have broken every chain There's salvation in Your name Jesus Christ, my living hope Hallelujah, praise the One who set me free Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me You have broken every chain There's salvation in Your name Jesus Christ, my living hope Jesus Christ, my living hope Oh God, You are my living hope.* We were bound with those same heavy chains of restraint dictated by our sins (much as Dickens' Marley) until Christ broke those chains and set us free. Remember poor Lazarus, when called forth from the tomb bound hand to foot in grave clothes? These are tightly wound about the body even still today in the Middle East. What did Christ command concerning these restraining wraps? *Loose him, and let him go!* (John 11:44) He has done the same for those of faith. When we claim to believe in the Name of Jesus Christ, that declaration must be more than empty words – it must reflect a deep and impassioned heart-felt belief that Jesus is Lord, Savior, Redeemer, and Sovereign of our souls – and that declared acceptance must rule your life henceforth.

**I** WILL lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. 2 My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. (Psalm 121:1-2)