

The word of God says that according to God the Father's great mercy He has "caused us to be born again to a *living hope*, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Pet 1:3) And in Psalms David writes, "You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in Your word." (Psa 119:114) There is a great hope and refuge found in leaning on the everlasting arms of our Heavenly Father. The very One who formed us in our mother's womb, our Creator, speaks words of hope to us in Isaiah 43: "***Do not fear***—for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine!" *When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.*" (Isa 43:1b-3a) Jesus Christ is our hope and shield, in times of difficulties. He is the resurrection and the life, when we are weak and hurting. The one who believes in Him, though he may die, yet shall he live!

Another word of encouragement spoken to us, through the writer of Hebrews, assures us that Jesus always lives to make intercession for those who draw near to God. (Heb 7:25) This is a great comfort and stay as through many tribulations we *must* enter the kingdom of God. Truly our God is mighty to save us, and will be with us always, even to the end of the age. In fact, there is an "inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven" for us, who are being kept (protected) by the power of God through faith. (1 Pt 1:4-5) Through the resurrection power of the risen Christ and the perfect redemptive power of His precious blood we who, through faith, rest our hope completely on the grace to be brought to us at the revelation of Him, who loves us and gave His life for us, will obtain as the outcome of our faith, the salvation of our souls. "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world and will save His people from their sins!" (Jn 1:29; Matt 1:21)

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people ... to grant that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him *without fear* in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days." (Lk 1:68b,74-75)