

rooted in a God who suffers with us in our trials and difficulties (**Isaiah 63:9**). It has as its foundation a Christ who once lived in human flesh, who understands us and strengthens us in all our trials (**Hebrews 4:15**). He identifies with us in our tears. He came to provide us with the hope of a better tomorrow. Through Christ the gift of eternal life is ours (**John 3:16**). He is our hope (**1 Timothy 1:1**). By faith, as we grasp the gift of eternal life that He so freely offers, we look beyond the problems of this life to the eternal fellowship and everlasting joy that He graciously offers us.

HOPE'S TWO GREAT EVENTS

The entire Bible focuses on two great events—the first and second coming of Christ. He came once to redeem us from the guilt, condemnation, and consequences of sin. “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (**Romans 6:23**). He will come again to deliver us from the presence of sin. One day Jesus will return in glory to take us home. He declared, “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have

told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (**John 14:1-3**).

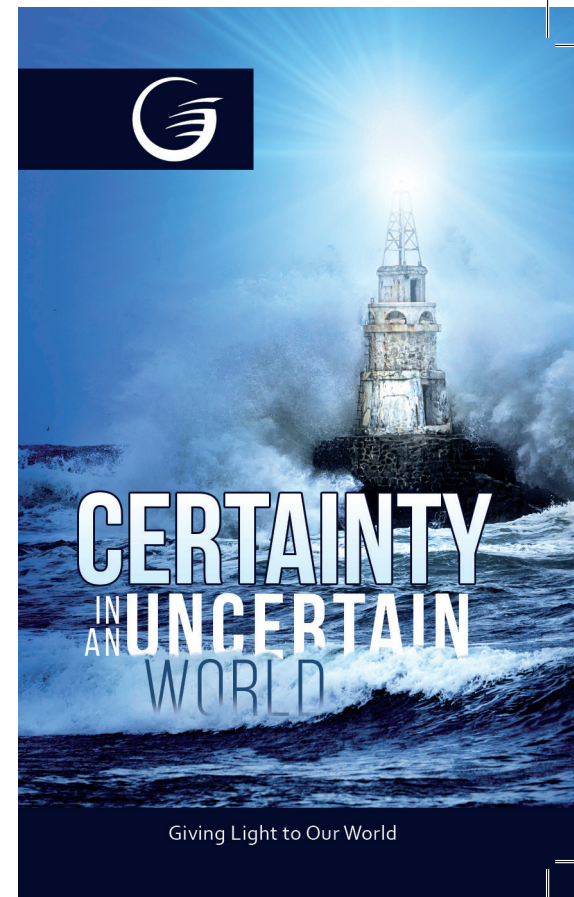
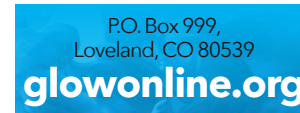
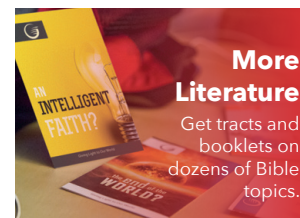
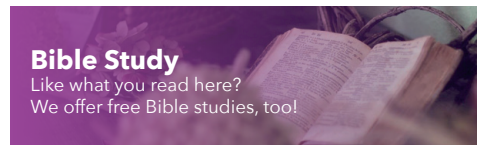
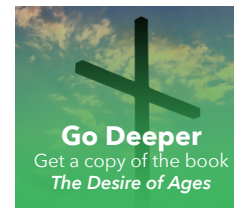
Today let your heart be filled with hope. One day soon Jesus will come and end the heartaches and trials. The challenges and difficulties of life will be over, and we will live with Him forever. In an uncertain world, His promises are sure. Why not right now bow your head and thank Him for His wonderful promises, praying this simple prayer?

Dear Jesus,

Just now I open my heart to You. Fill me with a sense of certainty that Your promises are true. Help me grasp them personally and live in the hope of salvation through Jesus Christ and the assurance that You are with me daily to strengthen and encourage me. By faith I believe I can live with a heart filled with hope, confident that one day soon You are coming to take me home to joyfully live with You forever. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

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If you could choose a single word to describe the mindset of this generation, what would it be? I would choose the word *uncertainty*. More people seem uncertain about the future than ever before. They are uncertain whether some senseless terrorist attack or hostile nation will suddenly snuff out their lives. They are uncertain about whether we will suddenly be wiped off the face of the earth by nuclear war, or whether global warming will destroy us first.

For millions this sense of uncertainty is extremely personal. They are uncertain where their next meal is coming from or where they will sleep tonight. People are uncertain about their health, their marriages, and their future. Deep within the fabric of their beings, down inside where it really counts, they feel troubled about what might happen next. They have a sense of unease about what is coming on this world. They are seriously concerned about what kind of world their children will grow up in and where society is headed.

Moral principles once taken for granted are being seriously questioned today. The moral foundation of society appears to be crumbling. Very little is certain. Many have lost hope

in a bright tomorrow and a positive future. Someone has said, "You can live days without food, hours without water, minutes without air, but no time at all without hope."

DESPERATE PEOPLE DO DESPERATE THINGS

The general unrest in our society, this inner sense that something is not right and little seems certain, this fear about the future, has created a sense of hopelessness. This hopelessness has led millions to experience major depression, which affects 20 percent of the world's population at some point in their lives. The World Health Organization predicts that depression will rival heart disease as the health disorder with the highest disease burden in the world. One person dies by suicide approximately every 40 seconds somewhere in the world, and global suicide rates have increased 60% in the past 45 years.

Antidepressants produce around \$6 billion in worldwide sales annually. In the United States alone, medical professionals fill over 270 million prescriptions for these medications each year. In desperation, many people turn to alcohol, and according to the World Health Organization,

about 140 million people throughout the world suffer from alcohol-related disorders.

HOPE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

When we lose hope, dark clouds of despair hang over our heads. The future appears gloomy and uncertain. But hope leads us from what is to what can be. Hope paints tomorrow in bright colors. It lifts our spirits from the mud below to the heavens above. William Shakespeare wrote, "The miserable have no other medicine, but only hope."

Hope is not some vague longing for a better future. Hope is not baseless desire lacking real certainty or assurance. The ancient scriptures present hope as a strong, confident expectation based on the unchangeable promises of God. The apostle Paul, writing in the Bible book of Romans, states that "whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4).

The promises of God reveal hope for today, tomorrow, and forever. They speak with certainty in an uncertain world. They speak hope to our troubled minds and peace to our anxious spirits.

The Bible reveals that God created each one of us in His image, and He longs for us to live joyful, abundant lives (Genesis 1:27; John 10:10). We are His special possession. He promises to never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5, 6).

Although we face challenges and life might not go as we planned or desired, the promises of God are sure. The ancient prophet Isaiah gives us this assurance: "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You" (Isaiah 26:3). The prophet continues with these words of encouragement: "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10). Our happiness is not based on the illusionary idea that nothing bad will ever happen to us, or the mythical dream that each day is brighter than the day before. In reality bad things do often happen to good people.

We live in a broken world. Sickness, suffering, poverty, and disease afflict both the righteous and the unrighteous. But here is the difference: those who put their faith in God are filled with hope. We anchor our hope in a God who will never let us down (Hebrews 6:18). Hope is