

7 ASPECTS OF THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE



1. The word “hope” is a translation of the Greek word *elpis* (G1680). Vine says, “... in the NT, ‘favorable and **confident expectation**...’ It has to do with the unseen and the future... ‘Hope’ describes (a) the happy anticipation of good (the most frequent significance)”. People normally think of hope as a “desire for something to happen; not being certain; wishing”. Biblical hope is a “confident expectation”. It is a certainty because such hope is based on the promises of God. The Greek word *elpis* appears 53 times in the New Testament. It is translated as “hope” 52 times and “faith” 1 time.
2. The Hebrew writer says our hope is “an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil” (**Hebrews 6:19**).
 - a. “... **an anchor of the soul**”. “Hope accomplishes for the soul the same thing which an anchor does for a ship. It makes it fast and secure. An anchor preserves a ship when the waves beat and the wind blows, and as long as the anchor holds, so long the ship is safe, and the mariner apprehends no danger. So with the soul of the Christian. In the tempests and trials of life, his mind is calm as long as his hope of heaven is firm. If that gives way, he feels that all is lost” (Albert Barnes).
 - b. “... **sure and stedfast**”. “The gist of these two words together is that hope is ‘undisturbed by outward influences’ (asphales), and it is ‘firm in its inherit character’ (bebaios). This pair of qualifying terms is viewed as entirely appropriate to the metaphor... As a ship is held fast when at anchor, the life of the Christian is firmly secured by hope which binds that life to Christ, who has entered the heavenly sanctuary” (Daniel H. King, Sr).
 - c. “... **which entereth into that within the veil**”. “The point is that the Christian’s hope of anchor is not dropped into an earthly sea, but passes beyond the curtain of mystery into the heavenly realms. There it moors us to the very throne of God. Jesus passed beyond that veil taking our hope with Him, and sat down at God’s right hand (1:3). The next verse will further assert that He went there not on His own behalf, but on ours, as a forerunner. He has gone there ahead of us, and we are shortly to follow” (Daniel H. King, Sr).
3. When a Christian is asked what their hope is, they usually say “heaven”. But there are actually seven aspects of hope! So we will, as it were, unpack “hope”, repack it, and then consider the practical application.

Seven Aspects Of The Christian's Hope

1. The Resurrection

- a. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection (**Acts 23:8**).
- b. There will be a resurrection:

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His [Jesus’] voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (**John 5:28-29** ^{KJV}).

- This will be a universal resurrection, as implied in this passage. This is also brought out by Paul:

“Having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall *certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked*” (**Acts 24:15** ^{NASB}).
- It will be a resurrection of **both the righteous and the wicked**.
- The resurrection is **certain**.
- This is not talking about two resurrections, but two outcomes of the same resurrection: for the righteous it is a resurrection unto life, and for the wicked it is a resurrection unto damnation.

c. We note that we do read of resurrections in both the Old (1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:32-37; 2 Kings 13:20-21) and New Testaments (Mark 5:35-42; Luke 7:11-15; John 11:39-44):

- The Hebrew writers says:

“Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection” (Hebrews 11:35 KJV).

- All those who were previously raised from the dead had to die again! The *better* resurrection is that in which we are raised from the dead never to die again. This was the case with Jesus – He was put to death, but He was raised up from the dead never to die again – He is alive forevermore. Jesus, then, is referred to as “the firstborn from the dead” (Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:5).

2. A Spiritual Body

a. For some, the prospect of being raised in the same body is not a pleasant one! But notice what Paul says:

“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption” (1 Corinthians 15:50 KJV).

b. This being the case, we can see that *a change will be necessary*. Let us notice what Paul says in the next few verses:

“Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:51-53 KJV).

- The need for change is stressed earlier:

“So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body” (1 Corinthians 15:42-44 KJV).

c. The spiritual body will never die; it will be free of all disabilities and diseases; we shall be free of all fleshly temptations (Revelation 21:1-5).

3. Seeing The Lord In Glory

a. All shall see the Lord in glory:

“Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24 KJV).

- Jesus' desire is that we should see Him in glory.
- The place Jesus desires us to be is “Where I am” – heaven. Heaven will be our home, not a renovated earth.

“When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left” (Matthew 25:31-33 KJV).

b. The righteous cherish the hope of seeing Him:

“Arise, O Yahweh, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, which is Thy sword: from men which are Thy hand, O Yahweh, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly Thou fillest with Thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes. As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness” (Psalms 17:13-15 KJV).

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2 KJV).

- c. In the “Songs Of The Church” hymn book, there is a hymn we often sing: “We Shall See The King Someday” (#617). The song acknowledges that our pilgrimage “may be often drear” and that we suffer pain and anguish, but then reminds us of our blessed hope of seeing the king someday.

Tho' the way we journey may be often drear,
We Shall See The King Some Day;
On that blessèd morning clouds will disappear;
We Shall See The King Some Day.

After pain and anguish, after toil and care,
We Shall See The King Some Day;
Thro' the endless ages joy and blessing share,
We Shall See The King Some Day.

After foes are conquered, after battles won,
We Shall See The King Some Day;
After strife is over, after set of sun,
We Shall See The King Some Day.

There with all the loved ones who have gone before,
We Shall See The King Some Day;
Sorrow past forever, on that peaceful shore,
We Shall See The King Some Day.

Chorus:

We Shall See The King Some Day,
We will shout and sing some day;
Gathered 'round the throne,
When He shall call His own,
We Shall See The King Some Day.

- Another song – “When We All Get To Heaven” (#708) – has the following verse:

Let us then be true and faithful,
Trusting, serving ev'ry day;
Just One Glimpse Of Him In Glory
Will The Toils Of Life Repay.

- d. I have saved the following passage till now because I wanted to make two points:

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus” (Titus 2:11-13 NASB).

- We look forward to the appearing of Jesus; we are looking forward to seeing Him in glory. This is our hope.
- Another important point to note is that Jesus is called “Our great God and Savior”. Many deny the deity of Christ, but here Paul affirms it.
- Some suppose that this may be referring to God the Father and Christ Jesus. But where do we ever read in scripture about God the Father coming back? All references in scripture are to Christ coming back, not the Father.

4. Being Like Jesus

- a. At the present time we dwell in these earthly tents, and there is not anything about our physical appearance that gives us any clues as to what we shall be at Christ's coming. As John says, "... it doth not yet appear what we shall be".

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, **we shall be like Him**; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2 ^{KJV}).

- Daniel H. King, Sr., comments: "John, however, in the strongest possible language announces that **now are we the sons of God**. The emphatic *nun*, **now** is offered in opposition to *oúpō*, **not yet** in the sentence; it suggests that the present state is known, but the future [state] remains unrevealed in its fullness. The word *nun* [now] declares our present state as God's children, but also suggests a future state grander and more glorious than can be anticipated based upon outward circumstances".
- John says we shall be like Him because, "We shall see Him as He is". There is something about *seeing Him* that will transform us. "Like Him", certainly in having a glorified body but also like Him in regards to His nature. John MacArthur comments: "This phrase introduces the fourth feature of the believer's hope in 1 John 2:28-3:3. When Christ returns, He shall conform every believer to His image, i.e., His nature. A tension exists between the first part of the verse ("now we are children") and the latter part ("we shall be like Him"). Such tension finds resolution in the solid hope that, at Christ's return, the believer will experience ultimate conformity to His likeness (see notes on Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 15:42-49; Philippians 3:21). The glorious nature of that conformity defies description, but as much as glorified humanity can be like incarnate deity, believers will be, without becoming deity".

- b. Yes, we will be like Jesus when we see Him, but the process of becoming like Him begins in this life:

- God predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son:

"For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:29 ^{KJV}).

- As disciples of Christ, we are expected to strive to be like Him:

"The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" (Matthew 10:24-25 ^{KJV}).

- We ought to imitate Christ:

"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1 ^{KJV}).

- As He is, so we strive to be as He is:

"Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4:17 ^{KJV}).

- c. If we desire to be like Him, then we will study and learn as much about Him as we can.

5. Receiving A Reward

- a. Jesus spoke of a reward:

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matthew 5:11-12 ^{KJV}).

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works" (Matthew 16:27 ^{KJV}).

"And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:12 ^{KJV}).

- Jesus spoke of a mansion:

“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” (John 14:2 KJV).

- Jesus spoke of a crown (see also James 1:12):

“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Revelation 2:10 KJV).

b. Moses looked for a reward:

“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward” (Hebrews 11:24-26 KJV).

c. We, too, look for a reward. It is the hope of a reward that gives us the strength to endure all our trials and tribulations:

“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Romans 5:3-5 KJV).

6. Freedom From Sin

a. A Christian is one made free from sin:

“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness” (Romans 6:17-18 KJV).

- While we have been set free from the power, dominion, and consequences of sin, it does not mean we will not sin (1 John 1:8; 1 John 2:1).

b. A Christian's hope is to be free from sin...

- Free from an environment of sin – heaven will be a place free from sin (Revelation 21:7-8, 27).
- Free from the possibility of sinning – we will be made perfect (Hebrews 12:23). Consider: much sin comes through the flesh, but since we will have spiritual bodies, such temptations will not be possible.

c. However, we must, in this life, strive to be free of sin:

“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure” (1 John 3:3 KJV).

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Corinthians 7:1 KJV).

7. Eternal Life

a. The great hope we have is eternal life:

“Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began” (Titus 1:1-2 KJV).

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:5-7 KJV).

“Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life” (1 John 2:24-25 KJV).

b. This promise of eternal life was promised “before the world began”.

- The promise, then, was not made to people in the Old Testament.
- I thought Marshall Patton had the best answer: “The most natural and reasonable explanation is: God made promise of eternal life for believers to Himself before the world began. This He did when He purposed to save us before the world began (2 Timothy 1:9). The promise is inherent in the purpose. When one purposes to do something, it is the equivalent of promising Himself to do it. Paul’s point here is that this promise is of long standing, reaching back through the ages into eternity itself”.

c. We possess eternal life now!

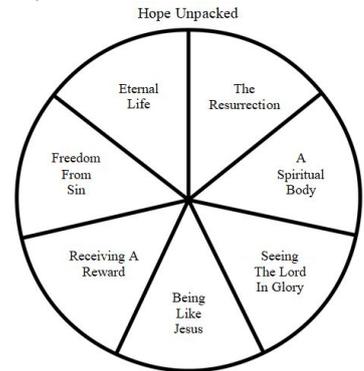
“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life” (John 6:47 KJV).

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36 KJV).

“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God” (1 John 5:12-13 KJV).

Application

1. In this lesson we have unpacked and considered the seven aspects of hope. Now we shall repack it and consider the application.
2. How can I tell if my faith, love and hope are genuine? Look for fruit! Faith is expressed through works (James 2:18), love is expressed through obedience (1 John 5:3), and hope is expressed in the pursuit of holiness (1 John 3:3; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 12:14).



3. John, having spoke of our hope to **see the Lord** and being made like Him, says, “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure” (1 John 3:3 KJV). Paul says something similar in respect to the promises of God: “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, **perfecting holiness** in the fear of God” (2 Corinthians 7:1 KJV).
4. Paul speaks of “**perfecting holiness**”. The pursuit of holiness is essential if we hope to **see the Lord**: “**Pursue... holiness**, without which no one shall **see the Lord**” (Hebrews 12:14 KJV). The question arises, “HOW do I pursue holiness?” I know of seven ways to pursue holiness. One who *genuinely* desires to pursue holiness will diligently study and meditate on the scriptures to discover those seven ways and apply them.