

**BENEFITS OF BEING A CHRISTIAN – THE CHRISTIAN’S HOPE**

1 Peter 1:3-9

## INTRODUCTION

- A. When one becomes a Christian they are a new person, 2 CO 5:17; JN 3-3-5, with a new hope.
- B. One of the cherished benefits of being a Christian is **“hope.”**

## DISCUSSION

**I. THE NATURE OF HOPE**

- A. Hope is the expectation of something desired. Hope = desire + expectation.
  - 1. “Hope is a waking dream.”
  - 2. Hope is always the expectation of something good — in contrast to fear, which is the dreaded expectation of something bad.
  - 3. Hope is always oriented toward the future - RO 8:24, 25; HE 11:1. It is waiting with:
    - a. Joy - RO 12:12.
    - b. Confidence - 2 CO 5:6-8; 2 TH 2:16, 17.
    - c. Patience - RO 8:25; 1 TH 1:3.
    - d. Discipline - HE 10:23; 1 PE 1:13.
  - 4. Hope’s orientation toward the future instills peace, calmness, “stillness” — but it is not slothful or inactive. Cf. RO 13:11; 1 CO 15:50-58; 2 CO 5:9.
- B. Hope is closely related to other important biblical ideas.
  - 1. Forgiveness of sins. Hope is the outgrowth of forgiveness - PS 130:1-8.
  - 2. Confidence, trust - PS 43:5; PH 4:6, 7.
  - 3. Optimism, buoyancy - RO 8:28, 31, 32; PH 1:19.
  - 4. Faith and love - 1 CO 13:13; 1 TH 1:3. Neither faith, hope, nor love can exist without the others.
    - a. There can be no hope without faith in Christ, yet faith without hope is empty – RO 4:18; 1 CO 15:14, 17-19; HE 11:1.
    - b. Love “hopes all things” (1 CO 13:7), and hope begets love - 2 CO 1:7; CO 1:4, 5; 1 TH 2:19. Cf. 1 JN 5:1.
- C. Hope is securely and objectively grounded.
  - 1. Critics have attempted to portray Christian hope as groundless naiveté, blind optimism, silly Pollyanna-ism, etc.
  - 2. Is not hope the worst of evils, for it prolongs the torment of man?
  - 3. Like faith (which is also not provable by the senses), hope is only as solid as the foundation upon which it rests:
    - a. God’s character - PS 71:5; 78:7; RO 15:13; 1 PE 1:5. God, the Guarantor of our hope, is faithful and can be confidently counted on - TS 1:2.
    - b. Christ’s resurrection - 1 CO 15:19, 20. Cf. RO 8:11; CO 1:27; 1 TI 1:1; 1 PE. 1:3, 4, 21.
    - c. The Scriptures - Rom. 15:4; Col. 1:5, 23.
  - 4. Hope will grow in intensity, but it never, even at first, need be tentative or uncertain - RO 6:8; 1 JN 5:13.

**II. THE OBJECTS OF HOPE.**

- A. God.
  - 1. The appearing of Christ - TS. 2:13; 1 JN 3:2.
  - 2. The presence of God and Christ - PH 1:23. Cf. Acts 7:55, 56; 1 TH 4:17; RE 21:22-22:5.
  - 3. The glory of God - RO 5:1-5.

- B. Eternal life.
  - 1. Bodily resurrection - Acts 24:15. Cf. JN 5:28, 29; 1 CO 15:50-58.
  - 2. Rest from sorrow, labor, tribulation - HE 4:1, 10, 11; RE 14:13; 21:1-4.
  - 3. Salvation, eternal inheritance, true life - TS 1:2; 1 PE 1:3-5. Cf. MT 25:21, 34; GA 5:5; CO 1:5; 1 TI 6:19.
  - 4. Glory - 2 CO 4:17; CO 1:27. Cf. RO 8:18; 1 JN 3:2.

### III. THE VALUE OF HOPE.

- A. Its protection and preservation.
  - 1. The power of hope to protect - 1 TH 5:8. Cf. EP 6:17.
  - 2. The power of hope to purify - HE 12:14; 1 JN 3:3.
  - 3. The stability and permanence which hope contributes to - Job 8:11-15; 27:8; PR 10:28. Cf. Job 31:24-28; MT 6:19-21; LK 12:16-21; 1 PT 1:4, 5.
  - 4. The mainstay and anchor provided by hope - HE 6:11, 12, 17-20.
  - 5. The confidence and trust engendered by hope - JE 17:7, 8. Cf. PS 1:1-6.
    - a. A new courage and boldness in life - 2 CO 3:12; EP 2:12; PH 1:20.
    - b. A new attitude toward death - 1 TH 4:13, 17, 18.
- B. Its productiveness and promise.
  - 1. The power of hope to give purpose and direction - HE 12:1, 2.
  - 2. The power of hope to give enthusiasm and aspiration - PH 1:12; 4:13.
  - 3. The diligence and industry inspired by hope - 1 CO 15:54-58; 1 TH 1:3.
  - 4. The unity and harmony made possible by hope - EP 1:18; 4:4.
  - 5. The joy and gladness of hope - HE 3:6. Cf. PS 16:8-11; 146:5-7; RO 5:1-5; 12:12.

### CONCLUSION

- A. "Living hope as a fundamental religious attitude was unknown in Greek culture....in the final analysis men had to stand without hope before the hostile forces of guilt and death" (E. Hoffmann, New International Dictionary of N.T. Theology, Vol. 2, p. 239). Cf. EP 2:12.
- B. Hope may be one of the most conspicuous blessings of Christianity, a thing other people notice and ask about: 1 PE 3:15.
- C. Hope is a gift of God: 2 TH 2:16-17; Cf. RO 6:23.
  - 1. Hope is centered on Christ, our "better hope" (HE 7:19).
  - 2. Hope is announced by the gospel - CO. 1:5, 23.
  - 3. Hope is a central theme of the gospel - Acts 23:6; 24:14, 15; 26:6, 7; 28:20.
- D. The Christian needs to meditate on and enjoy the great blessing that hope is. Paul prayed for the Ephesian brethren: "that you may know what is the hope of His calling" (EP 1:18).
- E. We also need to express gratitude for our hope, guard it, feed it, and share it. Peter urges us: 1 PE 1:13.
- F. "Great hopes make great men" (Thomas Fuller).
  - 1. If so, then the Christian has the greatest of potentials and the greatest of blessings.
  - 2. RO 15:13.
- G. The Christian alone can derive the full richness of this life, because he can see that it is the prelude to a deeper, better, more enduring life in God.
- H. HE 13:14-15.