

# HOPE

## Faith in a Promise and Hope for a Future Fulfillment

Paul prays that “the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe” (Eph 1:18). Christian hope will become reality: ‘the complete certainty of hope’ (Heb 6:11 RCL).

### INTRODUCTION

1. The objects of faith and hope differ: faith in a *promise* of God versus hope for a future *fulfillment* of that promise (“*the promise* to which our twelve tribes hope to attain” Acts 26:7; cf. “they hope for the fulfillment of *their word*” Ezk 13:6).
2. Faith and hope both come from God’s Word: “faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Rom 10:17) and “Remember the word to Your servant, In which You have made me hope” (Psa 119:49; cf. 130:5; Col 1:5, 23).
3. Biblical hope is certain because God always keeps his promises. That’s why “hope does not disappoint” (Rom 5:5), or better, in light of the pride-shame culture of the NT, “hope does not put us to shame” (TNIV). Cf. Psa 119:116; Isa 20:5.
4. Hope depends on the veracity (“hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago” Tit 1:2) and faithfulness of God (“He who promised is faithful” Heb 10:23b). We can do nothing to fulfill God’s promises.
5. Distinguish between *human hope* and *biblical hope*: human hope is always uncertain because it depends on human limitations (Ezk 13:6; Acts 16:19; 27:20; Rom 15:24; 1 Cor 9:10; 16:7; Phil 2:19, 23; “not to. . . fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God” 1 Tim 6:17; Phm 22; 2 John 12; 3 John 14), not on omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence (cf. Jer 14:22). Abraham understood this: “contrary to hope, in hope believed” (NKJV) or “Even when there was no reason for hope, Abraham kept hoping” (Rom 4:18 NLT). Dashed human hopes cause sadness, disappointment, and despair: “Hope deferred *makes* the heart sick” (Prov 13:12; cf. 19:18). Human hopes die when you die (Prov 11:7).

### HOPE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT (יָהַל; *yahal*; תּוֹהֵלֶת *tohelet*; שָׁבַר *sabar*; שֶׁבַר *seber*; תִּקְוָה *tiqvah*)

1. Hope in God (Psa 38:15; 39:7; 42:5, 11; 130:7; 131:3; 146:5; Jer 14:22). 3. “in His word do I hope” (Psa 130:5). 3. Hope for “His lovingkindness” (33:18), His “deliverance” (119:166 NET; cf. 130:7), and answers to prayer (38:15). 4. False hope: a horse (Psa 33:17); robbery (62:10); strength (Prov 11:7); Cush (Isa 20:5–6). 5. Cause of strength and courage: “Be strong, and let your heart take courage, All you who hope in the LORD” (Psa 31:24). 6. Cause of happiness: “How blessed is he. . . Whose hope is in the LORD his God” (Psa 146:5). “The hope of the righteous is gladness” (Prov 10:28). 7. Lost due to persecution and suffering: “My strength has perished, And so has my hope from the LORD” (Lam 3:18).

### HOPE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT (ἐλπίς *elpizo*; ἐλπίς *elpis*)

5. We hope and then wait (Rom 8:23–25; cf. Psa 39:7; 62:5; 130:5) for things, events, or states that are unseen (Rom 8:24–25) and future (cf. Jer 29:11; 31:17) to come to pass.
6. Hope in (1) God: “He on whom we have set our hope” (2 Cor 1:10); “we have fixed our hope on the living God” (1 Tim 4:10; cf. 6:17); “fixed her hope on God” (5:5); “so that your faith and hope are in God” (1 Pet 1:21); (2) Jesus: “we who were the first to hope in Christ” (Eph 1:12); “Christ Jesus, our hope” (1 Tim 1:1); hope to be like Jesus: “We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him” (1 John 3:2–3); (3) Moses and the Law (John 5:45); (4) the gospel (Col 1:23).
7. What we hope for: (1) deliverance from death (2 Cor 1:10); (2) adoption (Rom 8:23–24); (3) righteousness: “For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness” (Gal 5:5); (4) resurrection: “born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 1:3; cf. Acts 23:6; 24:15); (5) “the hope of eternal life” (Tit 1:2; 3:7); (6) grace: “fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 1:13); (7) the Rapture: “looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus” (Tit 2:13); (8) glory: “we boast in the hope of the glory of God” (Rom 5:2 NIV) and “the hope of glory” (Col 1:27); (9) removal of the curse on the earth (Rom 8:20–21).
8. God is the ultimate cause of hope: “may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing” (Rom 15:13a). Compare “My soul, wait in silence for God only, For my hope is from Him” (Psa 62:5) and “You are my hope” (Psa 71:5).
9. Hope comes from meditating on God’s character—kindness, compassion, and faithfulness (Lam 3:19–24 NET); from “perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures” (Rom 15:4); from “the power of the Holy Spirit” (15:13b).
10. Hope comes from tribulation, endurance, and passing difficult tests; that is, tribulation, endurance, and proven character are prerequisites of hope: “tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope” (Rom 5:3–4). Why? The answer is not readily apparent and needs some thought. When, after a severe test, you see your faith in the five promises of 1 Cor 10:13 vindicated and your hope for a way of escape fulfilled, for example, isn’t it easier to believe God will keep all of his promises and to have a much stronger hope for all future fulfillments? If he fulfills some of his promises now, will he not also fulfill all of his promises? If our hopes come true now, will they not also come true in the future? That’s the value of tests, trials, tribulation, persecution, impossible situations, and last minute saves—to increase our faith in all of his promises and our hope for all future blessings.
11. Hope is appropriated by faith in God’s promises: “laying hold of the hope set before us” (Heb 6:18). All of God’s promises offer hope: “the hope of the promise” (Acts 26:6). Faith is exercised *now*; hope is a desire we have for the *future*.
12. There are varying amounts of hope—from less to more and from little to a lot: “that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Rom 15:13b). Compare “There is more hope for a fool than for him” (Prov 26:12; 29:20).
13. Hope can be measured in terms of value—good, better, or best. Better promises produce a better hope; e.g., the New Covenant: “there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God” (Heb 7:19).
14. Love is more valuable than faith and hope: “now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love” (1 Cor 13:13).
16. Unbelievers have no hope for a glorious future: “having no hope and without God in the world” (Eph 2:12; cf. “the hope of Israel” Jer 14:8; 17:13; Acts 28:20); “that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope” (1 Thess 4:13).
17. Hope can keep you from sinning: “And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him [i.e., hope to be like Jesus at the Rapture] purifies himself, just as He is pure” (1 John 3:3).
18. Hope keeps us from drifting away from God: “This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a *hope* both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil” (Heb 6:19); *viz*, our anchor rests firmly in the heavenly Holy of Holies.
19. Hope is a gift of God’s grace: “God our Father, who has given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace” (2 Thess 2:16). Our future hope begins at the moment of salvation: “waiting eagerly for *our* adoption, the redemption of our body. For with *this* hope we were saved” (Rom 8:23–24 RCL) and “you were called in one hope of your calling” (Eph 4:4).
20. Tell others about your hope: “always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence” (1 Pet 3:15). Even boast about your hope (Rom 5:2 NIV).
21. Hope produces joy (‘rejoicing with hope’ Rom 12:12 RCL), confidence, courage, and boldness (“Having therefore such a hope, we use great boldness in *our* speech” 2 Cor 3:12).
22. Hold your confidence, boasting, hope, and confession firm to the end of your life (Heb 3:6; 6:11; 10:23). The opposite is “wavering” (10:23) and to be “moved away from the hope of the gospel” (Col 1:23). Cf. “Though He slay me, I will hope in Him” (Job 13:15); “I will hope continually” (Psa 71:14); and “hope in the LORD From this time forth and forever” (131:3). Paul praised the church at Thessalonika for their “steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess 1:3).
23. Hope, like faith, is a powerful defensive weapon in spiritual warfare: “having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation” (1 Thess 5:8).
24. Hope produces eternal rewards: “the hope laid up for you in heaven” (Col 1:5). Hope in this verse is metonymy of the adjunct in which the action (hope) is put for the object (what you’re hoping for from the promises of God’s Word). Notice that hope also produces a love for one another: the hope stored or put away for safekeeping in heaven was the *cause of* (*dia* + accusative) “the love which you have for all the saints” (verses 4–5, see footnote 8 in NET Bible).