

The Soul's Anchor Is the Hope of Heaven

By [Jason Jackson](#)

The Czech playwright Vaclav Havel contemplated, "Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense regardless of how it turns out." For the Christian, however, hope in God is both — things will turn out well, and make sense, "in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Romans 2:5).

The Christians in Colossae had a deep faith in God and abiding love for Christians. So should we "because of the hope which is laid up for you in the heavens" (Colossians 1:5).

"The emphasis on hope reminds us that the salvation which believers already enjoy in Christ has a future aspect" (F.F. Bruce, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984, p. 41). The preposition rendered "because" identifies a connection between the Christian's faithful and loving conduct (Colossians 1:4), and his expectation for the future. "On account of" the hope of heaven, he so lives. The child of God anticipates a heavenly home, and this is his soul's anchor (Hebrews 6:19).

"Hope" is confident expectation. The prospect is that something great is real and obtainable. Various phrases, connected with "hope," help us understand the Christian's perspective. We live with confidence because of what God has promised to the faithful (cf. 1 Peter 1:4; 1 John 5:13).

"The hope and the resurrection of the dead" means "the hope of the resurrection" (Acts 23:6). "And" (*kai*) is epexegetic, defining the object of hope as the resurrection (W. E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, Unabridged Edition, McLean, Virginia: MacDonald, n.d., p. 572). The resurrection is God's redemptive finale, a victory over the death-consequence of sin, which prepares us for eternal habitation (cf. Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58).

"The hope of the promise" is the expectation of the benefits of God's eternal purpose (Ephesians 3:9-11); all of his promises will come to pass (Acts 26:6-7).

"The hope of righteousness" is the realization of total conformity to the will of Christ, through his saving plan, at his coming (Galatians 5:5). Also, note the phrases, "the hope of the gospel" (Colossians 1:23); "the hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:2); "the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13); "the hope of salvation" (1 Thessalonians 5:8); "the hope of his calling" (Ephesians 1:18); and "the hope of eternal life" (Titus 1:2).

The "God of hope" (Romans 15:13) imparts to Christians a "living" (1 Peter 1:3), "blessed" (Titus 2:13), and "good" (2 Thessalonians 2:16) hope, through the "patience and comfort of the scriptures" (Romans 15:4). Simply put in Colossians 1:27, the message preached to the world is this: "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Note in Colossians 1:5 that the Christian's hope is not, "You can live forever in paradise on earth," as the title of a Watchtower Society publication asserts. Rather, the "one hope" (Ephesians 4:4) is "laid up in the heavens." Such a hope is not for an exclusive 144,000 (see "Who are the 144,000 of Revelation 7 and 14?").

The Christians of the Lycus Valley learned pure Christianity. Paul wrote that these truths were "heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel" (Col. 1:5). They learned and obeyed the gospel (i.e., the "good news" of salvation in Christ).











The gospel has not changed. We, like they were, are encouraged to adhere to it (cf. Colossians 2:6). Only the truth gives hope — real hope — and "hope is," as the American poet Wallace Rice put it, "the patent medicine for disease, disaster, and sin." Heavenly hope through the gospel of Jesus Christ is the anchor of the soul.

John Eadie summarized Colossians 1:5 very well when he wrote:

“The word of the truth of the gospel’ could alone reveal the nature and the certainty of future and celestial blessedness. The idea and expectation of spiritual felicity and glory in heaven are not connected with the sciences of earth, which deal so subtly with the properties and relations of mind and matter. These forms of knowledge and discovery lead but to the lip of the grave, and desert us amidst the dreary wail of dust to dust and ashes to ashes, but the truth contained in the gospel throws its radiance beyond the sepulcher, unveils the portals of eternity, and discloses the reality, magnitude, and character of ‘the hope laid up in heaven’” (*Commentary on the Epistle to the Colossians*, 1856, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957, p. 12).

To study the word “hope,” and the phrases in which it is found in Scripture, is to study the promises of God. With hope, we can persevere. With the hope of the gospel, we will realize heaven.

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Scripture References

Romans 2:5; Colossians 1:5; Colossians 1:4; Hebrews 6:19; 1 Peter 1:4; 1 John 5:13; Acts 23:6; Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58; Ephesians 3:9-11; Acts 26:6-7; Galatians 5:5; Colossians 1:23; Romans 5:2; Titus 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:8; Ephesians 1:18; Titus 1:2; Romans 15:13; 1 Peter 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:16; Romans 15:4; Colossians 1:27; Ephesians 4:4; 1 Thessalonians 5; Revelation 7; Colossians 2:6

Cite this article

Jackson, Jason. "The Soul's Anchor Is the Hope of Heaven." *ChristianCourier.com*. Access date: July 3, 2022.

<https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/1185-the-souls-anchor-is-the-hope-of-heaven>

Publisher

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