

# “Happy Hope”? or Whimsical Wish?



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*Looking for that happy hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).*

## THE OBJECT OF OUR HOPE

Within Christendom, as with so many other things, there is a skewed understanding of hope – especially our hope. Our true hope has been diminished by an emphasis on *timing*.

One day our Head, Christ, will make His glorious appearance with God in the Celestials; when He does, we, His Body, will likewise make our appearance with Him there. This will be our transformation to immortality and entrance into the ordained work for which He has already begun to prepare us in this, our first stage of life. *This* is the object of our “Happy Hope.”<sup>1</sup> Our Hope is the grand event itself, and *not its timing*.

## THE MEANING OF “HOPE”

The word “*hope*” used in most translations of our text does not mean “wish” as it often does in daily speech. The Greek is ἐλπίς (*elpis*) and means a *confident expectation* of that which will surely come to pass<sup>2</sup> – a sure and certain hope.<sup>3</sup> It is a divine certainty. This is why the *Concordant Version* translates it as “*happy expectation*.”

1. *Rotherham’s Emphasized Bible*.

2. “Confidence” (Strong); “confident expectation” (Thayer).

3. *Concordant Keyword Concordance*.

## **DON'T CONFUSE THE OBJECT WITH THE TIMING OF OUR HOPE**

Our Happy Hope is a confident expectation of a divine reality that unquestionably will take place.

When we confuse *the object*<sup>4</sup> of our Hope *with its timing*, we add a human wish-factor to it that diminishes its grand influence – so that it is not a “hope” at all.

If we say that we have Hope in our joint-appearing with Christ, this is indeed in something that is sure and certain to take place. However, if we confuse our Hope with some element of timing that we force on its truth, we make it a mere “wish.” We must not confuse *the timing of our hope* with our actual confident expectation of its object.

It is the *object* of our joint-glorification at His appearing that is our hope, *not its timing*. Otherwise the “hope” of all of the believing dead was in vain, because in reality it was *only* a “wish” and not a truth. Let me explain further.

### **THE DIVINE GUARANTEE**

Paul was given the *confident expectation* of our Happy Hope. This hope was a divine guarantee; but it came with no such guarantee that Paul himself would experience this appearing *during* his earthy lifetime. The timing was not in any way a part of the “Hope” of his latter epistles. The appearing of Christ in Paul’s lifetime was not a sure and certain expectation of his greater revelation.

Consequently, if any believer during the past nearly 2,000 years had confused the *object* of their Happy Hope for its *timing*, they would have “hoped” in vain – and vanity is not a part of faith.

Confusion concerning the “wish” for the joint-appearing to take place in our lifetime with the actual event of the Happy Hope given us in Scripture is likely to produce distraction, disappointment, disillusionment and depression instead of joy, happiness, contentment and peace. This often has been the experience of those who have confused such a “wish” for divine certainty.

However, when we realize that there has been no specific timetable revealed in association with our confident expectation, then its object can remain genuinely steadfast day-by-day through the trials of life, even until death.

Be sure to grasp the serious and crucial distinction. Our “wishing” for something, regardless of how sincere and earnest we may be, simply will not make it so – nor will it make it the truth of Scripture.

Never let anyone take away the object of our Happy Hope and substitute it for some wish. Our peace and joy are *not* dependent on either timing or circumstances, but on *Him* – and our confident expectation, our sure and certain destiny, is to join Him in His appearance in glory!

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4. “Blessed *object* of hope” (E.W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible*); the *object* of hope” (*Vincent’s Word Studies*)

## CHRIST'S APPEARANCE: NEAR TO ALL OF US

Before closing, I would like to make a *relative* application of these truths to our own lives. I often remember some very precious words from A.E. Knoch that I will adapt here for us:

In actual practice our appearing with Christ is not relatively a far-off future meeting, with long centuries of waiting in between. To our *consciousness* it comes immediately at the close of life. To be sure, the Lord does not appear at the decease of His saints; but to those who die it will seem *just as if* He has. To a sleeper, the morning immediately follows the evening. The night is nothing. To each one the moment of death will seem the moment of rousing.<sup>5</sup>

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5. *Concordant Studies in the Book of Daniel*, p. 330, adapted and abridged.

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