

# Biblical Hope: A Short Meditation

Joel Richardson

*“But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared for them a city.”* (Hebrews 11:16)

The people of God have always lived with their eyes fixed forward. From Abraham to the apostles, the righteous have always lived as strangers and exiles on the earth, not because they despised the earth, but because they awaited and yearned for its redemption, its return to perfection. They desired “a better country,” a *renewed world* under the reign of the promised King of Israel. Living with this longing has always defined the people of God.

## To Hope: To Wait

The Hebrew words used in the Bible for “hope” are often translated as “wait.” The word *qavah* means to wait, or to look eagerly, to hope, and expect. The root of the word has the meaning of binding together like twisting strands into a cord, implying both tension and strength for endurance. A common example is Isaiah 40:31: “*Yet those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength.*” In other words, those whose hope is in the Lord will find strength in such hope. Another similar word is *yachal* which means to wait, hope, to expect, or to tarry. This word is often used in contexts of enduring through trial. As the Psalmist declares to himself: “*Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him*” (Psalm 42:11). The word *tiqvah* similarly means hope, expectation, or a cord. This word comes from the same root as *qavah* but used as a noun. Sometimes it means “cord/rope” (Joshua 2:18). It is also the name of the Israeli national anthem, Hatikvah (The Hope). The main point to take away is that in the Bible, the words “wait” and “hope” are one and the same.

## The Righteous Are Those Who Wait

One of the primary defining characteristics of the righteous throughout the Old Testament is their relationship to the Lord and specifically their posture of faith toward His promises.

Psalm 25:3 says: “*Indeed, none of those who wait for You will be ashamed; those who deal treacherously without cause will be ashamed.*”

Whether the moment after death, or on the day of judgment, those who have chosen to live a life of hope, rather than being disappointed, will rejoice beyond measure. The “treacherous,” however, will be covered in shame. The righteous have always been defined as those who, throughout this life, cling to God’s faithfulness even when they cannot yet see His deliverance. Shame does not await those who eagerly long for God’s salvation.

## Hope and Inheritance

Psalm 37:9 offers a similar assurance: *“For evildoers will be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord, they will inherit the land.”*

In the Old Testament, “inheriting the land” was the ultimate picture of covenant blessing, the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham and his descendants. This verse teaches that the pathway to that inheritance is one of patiently waiting for the fulfillment of God’s promises, rather than grasping for power now or securing one’s own future by force.

## Hope as Worship

Psalm 147:11 adds another dimension: *“The Lord favors those who fear Him, those who wait for His lovingkindness.”* To “fear the Lord” is not only to stand in awe of Him and treat Him as the supreme reality and authority in life. It is also the acknowledgment that we will all stand before Him on the Day of Judgment. He alone controls our ultimate destiny. This reverence naturally expresses itself in patiently waiting, trusting His steadfast love (*chesed*), and being confident that He will act in accordance with His covenant promises.

Hope is not simply an inner feeling; it is, in fact, an act of worship. To wait for His lovingkindness is to declare that His character is trustworthy and His timing perfect.

## Hope in Affliction

A striking statement about waiting comes from Lamentations 3:25, written in the aftermath of Jerusalem’s destruction: *“The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him.”* These words were not penned in a season of ease but in the depths of national catastrophe and agony. The temple lay in ruins, the people had been slaughtered, the survivors were largely in exile, and yet Jeremiah affirmed the goodness of God to those who keep seeking Him. Waiting here is not passive, it is a deliberate heart and life posture. Even when hope seems crushed, the faithful continue to pursue God through prayer, repentance, trust, and hope.

## Hope in the Covenant Promises

These hope-centered verses are not isolated sayings; they fit into the larger covenant storyline of the Old Testament. Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel anchored the people’s hope in God’s promise to restore them, not merely to their land, but to Himself (Jeremiah 29:10–14; Ezekiel 36:24–28; Daniel 7:13–14). Waiting was not a call to inaction, but a summons to faithfulness; to obedience, repentance, and steadfastness, until God fulfilled His promises.

## Hope in the Psalms

The psalmists saw faithfulness and waiting as defining habits of the righteous life. Waiting is an expression of faith that God will someday save His people (Psalm 27:13–14). Waiting endures. It is long-suffering in hope: The righteous trusts the Lord's timing even when deliverance tarries (Psalm 130:5–6).

Waiting is also communal: The righteous are called to hope together, strengthening one another in worship and song (Psalm 33:18–22). This call to wait reinforces the truth that God's purposes are often long in unfolding, but always certain in their fulfillment.

## Hope Anchored in God's Character

Why could the righteous wait with such confidence? Because hope was grounded in who God is. He is faithful. He keeps His covenants and steadfast love to a thousand generations (Deuteronomy 7:9). He is sovereign; His plans cannot be thwarted by human schemes or hostile powers (Job 42:2; Isaiah 46:9–10). He is good; His purposes toward His people are always for their ultimate welfare, even when the path is painful (Genesis 50:20; Lamentations 3:25). The Old Testament repeatedly demonstrates that the object of hope determines its strength. To place hope in God is to rest on the only truly unshakable foundation.

## Hope That Looks Beyond the Present Age

While many Old Testament promises focus on near-term deliverance, such as the return from exile, restoration of the land, and renewal of the temple, there is also a clear expectation of a final, climactic intervention by God. The prophets speak of the “Day of the Lord” (Joel 2; Amos 5:18–24; Zephaniah 1), when God will judge the wicked, vindicate His people, and renew creation. In this sense, Old Testament hope is eschatological, pointing beyond history to the full realization of God's reign. The righteous wait not merely for temporal blessings in this age, but for the arrival of God's kingdom.

## The Unashamed Who Wait

Psalm 25:3 promises that *“none of those who wait for You will be ashamed.”* This is the unifying thread of Old Testament hope. Those who orient their lives toward God's future promises, who fear Him, seek Him, and patiently wait for His lovingkindness, will never be disappointed in the end.

The world may count such waiting as weakness or foolishness, but the Scriptures declare it to be the mark of true righteousness. To wait for the Lord is to live in constant alignment with the reality that He alone is the source of salvation, justice, and restoration.



The Righteous: Awaiting the Kingdom

fulfilled His promises before will do so again. And so we wait—steadfast, worshipful, and unashamed.

## Those Who Wait: Future-Oriented Hope in the New Testament

The New Testament takes the Old Testament's call to “wait for the Lord” and brings it into sharper focus. The promises anticipated by the patriarchs, sung in the psalms, and proclaimed by the prophets see a great light in the person and work of Jesus Christ. But as wonderful as His first coming is and was, the story is not complete. The same people who received the Messiah are still called to live in expectation, waiting for His return and the coming of His kingdom. In the New Testament, hope continues to be future-oriented. Through the Holy Spirit, we have already tasted the powers of the age to come, yet we still look forward to their fullness. The righteous continue to be defined by their waiting.

## Hope Amid Suffering

Paul's words in Romans 8 set the tone for the New Testament vision of hope:

*“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us. For the creation eagerly waits with anticipation for God's sons to be revealed”* (Romans 8:18–19).

This hope is not escapist; it acknowledges the reality of suffering while setting it against the backdrop of future glory. Paul goes further:

*“We know that the whole creation has been groaning together with labor pains until now. Not only that, but we, who have the Spirit as the firstfruits—we also groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. Now in this hope we were saved... if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with patience”* (Romans 8:22–25).

Here, hope is both cosmic and personal. All creation longs for the day when the curse will be lifted, and believers themselves await the resurrection body. The Spirit's presence now is a pledge or guarantee of what's coming. Throughout the New Testament, the Holy Spirit is described as “a seal” (2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13; Eph 4:30), A “deposit or guarantee” (*arrabōn*) (2 Cor 1:22; 2 Cor 5:5; Eph 1:14), “a down payment” of our future inheritance, and “the firstfruits (Rom 8:23)—a foretaste of the coming harvest of resurrection and redemption. All of these terms convey something that is promised, but incomplete.

## The Second "Appearance" of Christ

The New Testament hope centers not just on the good things to come, but on the appearance of a person, Jesus Himself. Hebrews 9:28 declares:

*"Christ... having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him."*

This makes hope intensely relational. We are not simply waiting for "better days" or a "happier ending"; we are waiting for Him. The joy of the future is bound up in the presence of the returning King, the embodiment of God Almighty in human form.

## Fixing Our Hope Completely

Peter exhorts believers to fix their attention on this coming grace:

*"Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:13).*

The call is not to partial hope, hedged with worldly backup plans, but to complete hope, resting the full weight of our expectation on the day Christ is revealed. Such a focused hope shapes our attitudes, priorities, and endurance.

## Hope as an Anchor

In a turbulent world, hope is portrayed as a stabilizing force. Hebrews 6:19 says:

*"This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast."* This is unquestionably one of my life verses. The imagery is vivid. An anchor holds a vessel steady against currents and storms; likewise, hope in God's promise keeps the believer steady in the trials and uncertainties of life. It is "sure and steadfast" because its object—God's word and His oath—cannot fail.

## Hope in Community

Hope in the New Testament is never meant to be lived in isolation. Hebrews 10:23–25 urges:

*"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not*



*forsaking our own assembling together... but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”*

The “confession of our hope” is something we hold together. The gathered Church strengthens each member to persevere until the day of Christ. As the return of Jesus (the day of gathering) draws nearer, mutual encouragement becomes all the more vital.

## Hope Produces Holiness

Hope in Christ’s return is a morally transforming experience. John writes:

*“When He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure”* (1 John 3:2–3).

The anticipation of seeing Christ face-to-face and facing the Day of judgment fuels the pursuit of holiness now. Hope is not a passive waiting room, it is the active training ground for Christlikeness. Paul echoes this in Titus 2:11–13:

*“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.”*

The same grace that saves us also trains us to live in a way that reflects our future destiny. This life is an internship for the age to come.

## Hope Fuels Mission

Hope is also missional. Jesus tied the timing of the end to the spread of the gospel:

*“This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come”* (Matthew 24:14).

Our anticipation of Christ’s return compels us to participate in the Great Commission. Waiting for Him means working for Him—proclaiming the gospel until the nations hear.

## The Final Cry of Hope

The Bible ends with the church’s longing voiced in unison with the Spirit:

*“The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come’”* (Revelation 22:17).

This is the Maranatha cry—an echo of the Old Testament’s call to wait for the Lord, now sharpened by the knowledge of Christ’s person and work. It is both a prayer and a proclamation, an acknowledgment that our ultimate hope is His coming.

## The Shape of New Testament Hope

The New Testament’s vision of hope retains the core elements of the Old Testament—confidence in God’s promises, patience in waiting, and certainty of His intervention—while adding new dimensions in light of Christ:

- Christ-Centered – We wait for a Person, not just an event.
- Resurrection-Focused – The redemption of our bodies is central to our hope.
- Spirit-Empowered – The Spirit’s presence is both a seal and a foretaste of what’s to come.
- Holiness-Producing – Hope fuels purity and godly living.
- Mission-Driving – Hope sends us into the world with the gospel.

## Conclusion: Waiting Well in the Last Days

In both the Old and New Testaments, the righteous are those who wait for the Lord. The wait for His deliverance and for the restoration of all things. The difference now is that we stay in the light of the cross and the empty tomb. Our hope is anchored in the fact that the One who promised to come has already come once, securing our salvation. That makes the promise of His return all the more certain.

To wait well in the New Testament sense is to live with eyes fixed on Jesus, hands busy with His work, hearts purified by His promise, and voices joining the Spirit’s cry: *Come, Lord Jesus!* This is the hope that steadies us in trials, binds us together in fellowship, drives us to holiness, and sends us into mission until the day our waiting ends in sight.

The New Testament does not diminish that hope; it intensifies it. Jesus came announcing the *Kingdom of God*, not as a poetic idea or as a mystical concept, but as a coming reality. He referred to it as a day when the meek would inherit the earth (Matthew 5:5), when the righteous would shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Matthew 13:43), when the Son of Man would sit on His glorious throne. The apostles would judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28). This is not a metaphor. Jesus was describing the future as the Bible envisions it.





The Spirit and the Bride Say "Come"

The apostles taught us to fix our eyes on that day when Jesus will be revealed from heaven in blazing fire (2 Thessalonians 1:7), when the dead in Christ will rise (1 Thessalonians 4:16), when creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption (Romans 8:21). It is the day of resurrection, reward, and restoration.

It is the day when the long-promised Kingdom of Israel will be restored, when David's greater Son will reign from Jerusalem, and all nations will stream to Zion to learn His ways (Isaiah 2:2–4; Acts 1:6–7).

This hope is not a theological footnote; it is the marrow of the Christian life. As Paul wrote, *"If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied."* (1 Cor 15:19). The resurrection of Jesus in history is a guarantee of the resurrection still to come. We live in anticipation. We wait, groaning inwardly as we await our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies (Romans 8:23).

This hope forms our courage in this life. It sustains our endurance. It also helps us to purify our lives. As John wrote, *"Everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure"* (1 John 3:3). For the Christian, the hope of the kingdom is not escapism; it is *faithful realism*. It is the vision that strengthens us to endure hardship, resist compromise, and proclaim the good news with confidence, for we know what is coming.

So let us hold fast to this hope. Let us set our minds not on things that are passing away, but on what is eternal (Colossians 3:1–4). Let us press on as pilgrims and priests, as witnesses and heirs of a kingdom that cannot be shaken. And let us remember daily that our King is coming.

*"Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."* (1 Peter 1:13)