
“Messiah”

TITUS 2:13

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BOTTOM LINE UP FRONT

Paul calls the return of Jesus our “blessed hope.” This implies more than wishful thinking; it is great expectation and high degree of certainty. But why was Paul certain that Jesus would come back? In short, he knew, and we know, Jesus will return because of who Jesus is – the promised Messiah. That Jesus is the promised Messiah means God is a promise-keeping God. He has kept His promises and He will continue to keep His promises, including the return of Jesus. But there is hope for more than just the life to come!

INTRODUCTION

It’s Christmas, my favorite time of year! I love the advent season and I love telling the greatest story ever known to man – the story of the Creator of the Universe putting on flesh, becoming like us, dwelling among us, suffering with us, in order to die for us that we might have ever lasting life with Him in Heaven. Like holding a diamond in the light and examining the various faces, beholding the beauty from every angle, the task for the preacher each advent is to turn the diamond just a little and see yet another facet of the Christmas story. To do this today, we turn to Titus 2:13.

In Titus 2:13 Paul writes about **“waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”**

There are a few things I would like to unpack this morning as we begin our advent series, titled Unwrapping the Names of Jesus. This Sunday is traditionally associated with hope in the advent calendar. If you’ve set up your advent kit, you’ll see the hope card today and of course we lit the hope candle today.

WHAT IS HOPE?

But when we talk about hope, I wonder if we mean the same thing. I wonder if when I say hope, you think the same thing I do. Do we think the same thing Paul did?

What is hope? According to the Miriam-Webster online dictionary, “hope implies little certainty but suggests confidence or assurance in the possibility that what one desires or longs for will happen.”

Is this what you think of when you consider the blessed hope of the appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ? Little certainty? Or is there reason to say we have great certainty it will happen? When Paul wrote of this **blessed hope**, he used a word that implied eager anticipation and expectation, *elpida*. That doesn’t sound to me like “little certainty,” but great confidence.

This is the season of advent, traditionally observed the four Sundays prior to Christmas Day. It’s a season that reminds us of the wait. For millennia faithful people of God awaited their messiah. They endured suffering and hardship as they longed for the arrival of the Messiah. Advent is a season to remind us of what our faithful ancestors endured and what most failed to realize, what we take for granted – Messiah’s arrival.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF ADVENT

At the same time, we find ourselves able to relate to the struggle of waiting now. We await the **appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**. We find ourselves in an advent of a different kind, but my prayer is that as we celebrate the Christmas advent season it increases your hope as we wait for the return of Christ in glory!

We get this hope from the promise of Jesus in *Matthew 16:27*, “*For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father...*” He went away but He promised He would return and when He returns it will not be meek and mild. He will not return as the suffering servant or the lamb to be slaughtered. Rather, He will return in the Father’s glory.

That’s what Paul points us to when he says **the appearing of the glory**. Jesus is going to return in full glory...glory that you and I cannot even fathom, the Father’s glory. What kind of glory surrounds the Father? Well, that’s the kind of glory that is going to surround Jesus when He returns.

In John 14, Jesus made another promise about His return that ought to have our hearts bursting with hope, “*Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.* John 14:1-3

Jesus promised that even though He was going away, which would bring great sorrow to His disciples, this sorrow is only for a while. When He returns, He is going to take us to a place He has prepared for us.

This is the **blessed hope** of the Christian. This is the essence of the hope of Christianity. Our hope is not simply for this life. We don’t primarily hope in Christ so that this life will be better or go more smoothly. In reality, many who hope in Christ will live very difficult lives, yet their hope is no less legitimate.

THE PAIN OF CHILDBIRTH

We have the promise of Jesus’ return and the assurance that when He returns, He’s going to make all the suffering of the present life pale in comparison. As Jesus described to His disciples the sorrow they would experience in life after His departure, He compared it to a woman giving birth.

The pain is real but that pain is quickly forgotten and the mother is filled with joy of bringing a human being into the world. When the mother receives the reward of holding her baby skin to skin, the suffering gives weigh to glory.

Likewise, when we behold the face of **our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**, all pain in this life will be forgotten. Paul says in *Romans 8:18*, “*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*” And listen to what Peter said in *1 Peter 1:6-7*, “*In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*”

Glory will outshine the worst hardship. This is a powerful and vivid reminder that Christians have real hope. It’s not that life is going to be easy, but that this life is preparing *us* for the place Jesus is preparing *for us*.

But how do we know He is going to return in the first place? Why should this serve as encouragement in the trials of the present life? How do we know Jesus is going to return and that this isn’t a pipe-dream?

WE KNOW JESUS WILL RETURN BECAUSE WE KNOW WHO HE IS

Paul called him **our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**. That's a mouthful and it's loaded with meaning. In the time remaining I want to unpack the title Paul ascribes to Jesus – that of **Christ**.

Christ is not Jesus' last name. It is an English title translated from the Greek *Christos* which means "the Anointed." And *Christos* is the Greek word for the Hebrew Messiah. Our great God and Savior, Jesus, is the Christ, the Messiah. He is the anointed One, the One promised from the beginning to make things right between God and man.

We have hope in the trials of life knowing Jesus is going to return, and we know Jesus is going to return because we know who He is, the Messiah. That Jesus is the Messiah means God kept His promises, which is why we have confidence that Jesus is going to keep His.

In Genesis 3:15 God promised that the Messiah would crush the serpent's head. As we look to the cross of Christ, victory seemed to belong to the serpent, our enemy the Devil, as Jesus hung there bleeding and dying. That is until Sunday morning when the king of glory walked out of the grave conquering sin and death and symbolically crushing the serpent's head. Satan is now on borrowed time until Jesus finally and eternally banishes him to hell.

In 2 Samuel 7:16 God promised that Messiah would be the son of David and would have an enduring kingdom. "*And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.*" The problem is all hope seemed to be lost for the royal line of David in Psalm 89, where we read that the crown of David was in the dust. There was little reason to hope in Messiah. The Psalmist appealed in verses 19-37 to God's promise to David – that He would establish his throne forever and never be untrue to His faithfulness. Then in verses 38-39, he laments that it appears God has forgotten His promise. "*You have renounced the covenant with your servant; you have defiled his crown in the dust.*" *Psalm 89:39* It's as if the psalmist is declaring, "God, you promised! How could you let this happen?"

The crown of David was in the dust and the royal descendants of David were all under the curse of Jehoiakim recorded in Jeremiah 22. No descendant of Jehoiakim would sit on David's throne ever again. But doesn't that mean the end of the throne of David? Isn't that how royalty works? Descendants continually sit on the throne or it's no longer considered the ancestor's throne. David's throne is supposed to be established forever, but by the time of the Babylonian captivity, it seems like it's all over. There was little hope that the promise given to David of an everlasting throne would be fulfilled. But the virgin birth!

The virgin birth meant the Messiah could fulfill God's promise to David while also avoiding the curse of David's offspring. In Matthew we read the biological lineage of Joseph back through David to Abraham. Matthew wrote to Jews with the intent of demonstrating that Jesus had the right to sit on King David's throne. There was only one problem – God's curse of Jehoiakim in Jeremiah 22. God said that Jehoiakim's descendants would never sit on the throne of David.

Because of the virgin birth, Jesus wasn't descended from Jehoiakim! He was adopted by Joseph, who was descended from Jehoiakim, but Jesus Himself was not descended from Joseph. He was descended from Mary, the virgin. And Mary was descended not from Jehoiakim, nor from the line of Solomon, but from Nathan, David's other son, as recorded by Luke.

I love how just a few verses after the curse to Jehoiakim, God spoke through Jeremiah prophesying of another branch from David, one who will reign as king and deal wisely...and his name will be called, "*The Lord is our righteousness.*" *Jeremiah 23:6*

Here's the point: God worked through history and through genealogies and through the apparent victories of the enemy to bring to us our great God and Savior Jesus Christ the first time.

And if He worked through history and genealogy and apparent victories of the enemy to bring the Messiah in the first place, we have real reason to hope that He hasn't done all this to break His promises now.

What does this mean for us today? How does knowing this give us hope? I want to give you three hope-filled assurances as we conclude this morning...

HE CAME, THEREFORE HE IS COMING AGAIN

God is a promise-keeping God, evidenced by the fact that Jesus is the promised Messiah. God is going to fulfill the promise of Jesus' return.

Have you ever consider this? What I mean is have you ever really contemplated that our assurance, **our blessed hope** as Paul says, of Jesus' return in glory is rooted in what He has already done, and not on wishful thinking? If you believe Jesus is the Messiah, you have no reason to doubt He's also returning for you.

GOD IS WORKING THINGS OUT

Whatever unfolds in history is unfolding according to the sovereign will of God. There has never been a moment in which God had to go back to the drawing board. No event in human history in general, nor in your life specifically, has caught Him off guard.

From Jesus' birth to His death, burial, and resurrection, and in a million ways before and after, God has demonstrated He is fully in control and working things out for our good.

Romans 8:28 declares that God is working *all things* for your good. It may not feel good right now and it may never feel good. But Jesus, Peter, and Paul all assure us that the pain of our suffering is going to be turned into rejoicing like the pain of childbirth when a mom holds her healthy baby in her arms.

THERE IS HOPE FOR THIS LIFE, TOO!

Our hope is not only for the life to come. That Jesus is the long-awaited and promised Messiah means we can count on God to do all He said He would do in this life.

In Hebrews 13:5, He promises to never leave you, nor forsake you. He promises that His grace is sufficient for you in 2 Corinthians 12:9.

He promises to give you wisdom when you ask for it in James 1:5. In Hebrews 4:16, He promises access to His throne of grace where you will find mercy in your time of need.

He promises to be with you through His Holy Spirit who dwells within you in Romans 8:9. The Spirit of God was to guide you and comfort you and convict you as Jesus promised in John 14:16 and 16:8. And He promises that the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ, Himself, are praying for you right now in Romans 8:26 and Hebrews 7:25.

He promises to give you rest in Matthew 11:28, peace in Philippians 4:6-7, and joy in John 15:11. He promises that you can find contentment with plenty or with need in Philippians 4:13.

He promises to set you free from the bonds of sin in Romans 6:18, and to forgive you and cleanse you of all unrighteousness in 1 John 1:9. He promises in Galatians 5:16 that you can find victory over sin when you walk by the Spirit. He promises in John 15 that those who abide in Him like a branch to a vine, will produce fruit – the fruit of spiritual growth and kingdom advancement.

According to Romans 8:37, we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

In Romans 8:35 God promises to love you unconditionally. And in Romans 8:1 He promises there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!

These, and many other promises, are yours and our God is a promise-keeping God.

WHO CAN CLAIM THESE PROMISES?

Did you notice the qualifier at the end of that last one, though? Who can claim these promises as their own? For whom should these promises inspire hope in the difficulties of life? The promises of God are for those who are *in Christ Jesus*.

The ones who place their faith in Christ, in Messiah, the ones who, as we'll see next week, call upon Jesus as Lord of lords, these are the ones for whom the promises of God can be claimed and anticipated.

Paul said in Titus 2:13, our blessed hope is the appearing of our great God and **Savior** Jesus Christ. The Messiah is the savior. The Messiah is the One God appointed to take away the sins of the world. The Messiah is the One in whose name we find salvation from sin and the wrath of God. *“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12*

For everyone who calls on the name of Jesus Christ, His appearing is not only a blessed hope, but it's also glorious. For us it will be a day of unbridled and uncontrollable joy. We eagerly long for that day in much the same way the faithful men and women of yesterday longed for His first appearance.

If the manger in Bethlehem was the down-payment, and at if the cross and the empty tomb, the bill was paid in full, then His return will be the collection of what is His. Jesus is coming for His Church!

This Christmas, as you gaze upon the babe in the manger, perceive the Messiah, the Savior, and the soon returning King!