

Our Blessed Hope

The wonderful pastor and commentator Warren Wiersbe wrote, “God’s people don’t live on expectations; they live on promises. Faith and hope are nourished by the promises of God given in the Scriptures” (*The Bible Exposition Commentary, Isaiah-Malachi*). The reason Wiersbe’s statement is so important to our Christian thinking and living is that our expectations, when unchecked by Scripture, will be directed by **our** wants, **our** feelings, **our** circumstances, and so on. They fall significantly short of God’s purposes for His people. In contrast, God’s promises are entirely aligned to His unchanging character, perfect wisdom, and benevolent actions. They are unequivocally certain and will, without exception, be fulfilled **for God’s glory and our good**.

Warren Wiersbe’s assertion alludes to Ephesians 2:8-9, as Paul writes, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” Our faith and hope rests entirely on what God has done, what He is doing (Phil 2:13), and what He will do (Rom 5:2; 1 Jn 3:1-3).

As Zechariah’s prophecy draws to a close, its emphasis converges on the Branch - the long anticipated Messiah - who is the royal priest and the culmination of all of God’s promises. Through Zechariah, God encourages His people, Israel, that His promises are as certain as if they had already taken place. The phrase “thus says the Lord” appears ten times in chapter 8 alone to assure Israel of the surety of His faithful plan. He promises that Jerusalem will be rebuilt (vv. 1-6), that He will regather His people (v. 7), restore His relationship with Israel (v. 8), refresh the land of Israel (vv. 9-13), renew the covenant standards (vv. 14-19), and redeem the Gentiles (vv. 20-23). **Every single divine promise is certain, because it is fulfilled by God Himself, Jesus Christ**. He is the epicenter of God’s doings. He has appeared once to bring salvation and will appear again to bring about our glorification and redemption of all creation. He embodies “our blessed hope” - the longing for His appearing which will, simultaneously, accomplish all that God has promised. What a glorious thought!

It is easy to forget that God has promised to be in the midst of His people (Haggai 2:4-5). Our wants, feelings, and circumstances can obscure our vision and cloud our joy. So, when your expectations don’t align with God’s promises, **trust His promises**. You might be surprised how “living in the future tense” will cause you to

view your circumstances, your responsibilities, and your relationships with a vastly different perspective and attitude.

Titus 2:11-14 (NIV) - *“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, **waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.”*