

Briefing Document: 1 John Lesson 52-Our Purifying Hope

February 18, 2026

Executive Summary

The following briefing document synthesizes the theological examination of "purifying hope" as presented in the study of 1 John. The central thesis posits that the expectation of the appearing of Jesus Christ is not merely a future-oriented belief, but a present-day catalyst for personal sanctification. By abiding in Christ, believers participate in their own purification through the energy of the Holy Spirit acting in response to their will.

A significant portion of the analysis is dedicated to defending the literal, physical return of Christ against the rising influence of Preterism and "Realized Eschatology," which suggest that end-time prophecies were largely fulfilled during the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. The document concludes that a literal interpretation of Scripture regarding Christ's imminent, visible return is essential for maintaining the "blessed hope" that motivates a blameless life.

The Doctrine of the Appearing

The concept of "purifying hope" is anchored in the eventual "appearing" or "coming" of Jesus Christ. This event is described as the next major milestone on the prophetic calendar, characterized by several distinct realities:

- **The Transformation:** Scripture indicates that when Christ appears, believers will see Him as He is and, consequently, will become like Him.
- **The Manner of Arrival:** As established in the Book of Acts, Christ's return will be "in like manner" to His ascension—physical, bodily, and visible in the clouds.
- **The Immediate Imminence:** The return of Christ is considered a "signless event" that could occur at any time. It does not require preceding prophetic signs to initiate the rapture of the church.

The study emphasizes that "God keeps His people through the energy of the Holy Spirit in response to their will." This underscores the active role a believer plays in their own purification while waiting for the realization of their hope.

The Scriptural Taxonomy of Hope

The importance of hope in the Christian life is underscored by the various descriptors used throughout the New Testament. These references define the character and quality of the believer's expectation regarding Christ's return.

Scripture Reference	Description of Hope
1 Timothy 1:1	Our Hope
Titus 2:13	Our Blessed Hope
2 Thessalonians 2:16	Our Good Hope
Romans 15:4	Our Comforting Hope
Romans 5:2; 12:12	Our Joyous Hope
Galatians 5:5	Our Righteous Hope
Hebrews 7:19	Our Better Hope
1 Peter 1:3	Our Living Hope
Hebrews 6:19	Our Sure and Steadfast Hope
Romans 5:5	Our Non-disappointing Hope
1 Peter 1:13	A Gracious Hope
Titus 3:7	Our Eternal Hope
Colossians 1:27	Our Glorious Hope
Hebrews 6:11	Our Assured Hope
1 Peter 3:15	Our Defensible Hope

The Challenge of Preterism and Realized Eschatology

The document identifies a growing theological trend where "more and more people who call themselves Christians are distancing themselves from any expectation of the second coming." This is primarily attributed to fear, ignorance, and the influence of Liberalism or Preterism.

Defining Preterism

Preterism (or Hyper-Preterism) is the belief that most or all end-time prophecies were fulfilled by 70 AD with the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple. This view often relies on a strict literal interpretation of *Matthew 24:34*: "Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place."

Theological Critiques of the Preterist View

- **Spiritualization of Prophecy:** To maintain that Christ returned in 70 AD, proponents must spiritualize physical events described in Scripture, such as the resurrection of the dead and the Great White Throne Judgment.
 - **The Absence of Hope:** If the "New Heaven and New Earth" were established in 70 AD, the tangible reality of a future beyond the grave is diminished. The current world, still plagued by sin and evil, would be the permanent state of the "new" earth, which contradicts the biblical promise of the total eradication of evil.
 - **Conflict with Physical Evidence:** Acts 1 describes a physical ascension and promises a physical return. Preterism fails to account for the absence of historical records showing the Lord descending with a shout or the dead in Christ rising in 70 AD.
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The Physicality and Manner of Christ's Return

To counter the spiritualization of the Second Coming, the analysis points to the historical and grammatical principles of biblical interpretation. The ascension of Jesus serves as the blueprint for His return.

- **Acts 1:9-11:** *"Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.'"*
 - **The Body of Christ:** Jesus was recognizable and physical after His resurrection, bearing the scars of the crucifixion. He ascended bodily and will return in the same glorified physical form.
 - **The Millennial Kingdom:** Believers will eventually reside with Christ in glorified bodies. The only participants in the millennial kingdom without initially glorified bodies are the saved survivors of the tribulation.
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Practical Sanctification: The Result of Hope

The study concludes that the belief in an imminent return has profound practical implications for daily conduct. *1 John 3:3* states: *"And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."*

Believing that Jesus could appear at any moment serves as a powerful motivation for blamelessness. The document uses the analogy of a driver slowing down upon seeing a police officer; the presence of an authority figure influences behavior. Similarly, living in the "light of Christ's coming" encourages a believer to ensure their walk is consistent with

Christ's nature. Those who treat the Second Coming as fiction or a past event lose this "marvelous motivation" for holy living.

Key Biblical Directives and Warnings

- **On Preparation:** Believers are commanded to be ready at all times, as the Son of Man comes at an hour that is not expected (*Luke 12:40*).
 - **On Date-Setting:** Attempts to predict the specific timing of Christ's return—such as those made by Hal Lindsey, Edgar Whisenant, or Harold Camping—are identified as efforts that "bring discredit on the name of Jesus Christ" and make followers appear foolish.
 - **On Abiding:** The overarching command from 1 John is to "*abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming*" (1 John 2:28).
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Greek Terminology Guide

Word	Phonetic Pronunciation	Definition
Fur rule^[^1]	fa-ner-OO	To appear, arrive, or be made manifest; used to describe the incarnation, resurrection, and future return of Christ.

[^1]: Note: This is the phonetic representation of the Greek term *Phaneroo* as transcribed in the source context. The speaker identifies this word as signifying "appearing" and "arrival" in the context of 1 John and the return of Christ.