

The Blessed Hope

Titus 2:13

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Titus 2:13

13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

This verse is so simple, yet so profound. It has strong implications regarding the timing of the rapture. In the NKJV, it seems to imply that the “blessed hope” and the “glorious appearing” might be separate events. But, in the Greek text, it is quite clear that this is not the case. The “glorious appearing” is what we as Christians are awaiting. It is a part of our “hope.” The NKJV is technically correct here, by translating the word “and.” But, it does not account for the “Granville Sharp Rule,” which applies to this verse.

Those who read the previous article will already be familiar with the Granville Sharp Rule. The Greek word *kai* is equivalent to our English word “and” or “also.” It is often used to connect two nouns in some way. It sometimes means the second noun is *in addition to* the first noun, distinguishing the two nouns. That is, two unrelated things are mentioned together. Example, “heaven **and** earth.” But, under certain circumstances, “*kai*” is used to connect two nouns together. With personal singular nouns it can refer to the same person. With impersonal or plural nouns the two are being joined together as a unit. Example with singular personal nouns: “the God **and** Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The second noun is a further description of the first noun, referring to the same person, yet different roles. In the case of impersonal and/or plural nouns, this structure indicates that both nouns are a single unit, or one noun is a subset of the other. The basic Granville-Sharp rule is as follows;

“If two nouns of the same case are connected by a “kai” [and] and the article is used with both nouns, they refer to different persons or things. [Sharp's rule VI] If only the first noun has the article, the second noun refers to the same person or thing referred to in the first.”¹

The key to understanding this rule is the use of the definite article (the). When we have two nouns connected by “*kai*” (and), we must look to see if the definite article (the) is used before BOTH nouns, or just the first noun. If it is used before BOTH nouns, Sharp's

¹ Vaughn and Gideon, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1979), p. 83.

rule VI applies and the two nouns are referring to separate things or persons being distinguished or contrasted. But, if only the first noun has the definite article, Sharp's rule I applies. Both nouns refer to the same person (in the case of personal nouns) or two things are joined in some kind of unit (with impersonal and plural nouns).² Now, let's apply this rule to Titus 2:13. Here is the Greek text followed by a word for word translation.

προσδεχόμενοι τὴν μακαρίαν ἐλπίδα καὶ ἐπιφάνειαν τῆς δόξης
anticipating **the** blessed hope **and** appearing [of] the glory

In this case the nouns are impersonal things. Both "blessed hope" and "appearing" are nouns of the same case. And, the first noun (blessed hope) has the definite article, while the second noun (appearing) does not. This indicates the "appearing" and "blessed hope" are being referred to as a unit. In an impersonal Sharp rule I construction, the relationship between the two nouns is either, a. distinct things being joined together as a unit, b. the first noun is a subset of the second, c. the second noun is a subset of the first, e. the two nouns are identical. In any case, with this construction, some kind of unity is being stressed between the two nouns.³ The NIV captures the meaning best in this verse: "*while we wait for the blessed hope - the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.*" So, in essence, this verse says that the "blessed hope" for which we are looking is (or at least included within) the "glorious appearing" of Christ. This begs the question, what is the "glorious appearing?"

Matt 16:27

27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

Matt 24:29-31

29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

² Wallace, Greek Grammar, Beyond the Basics, pp. 286-288, has the following explanation of Sharp's Rule. "*The Granville Sharp rule indicates that the two nouns are referring to the same person when personal singular nouns are found in the TSKS (Sharp) construction. When impersonal nouns are used, it implies one of the following:*

- a) the two nouns are being viewed together as a unit.*
- b) the two nouns are overlapping entities*
- c) the first noun is a subset of the second*
- d) the second noun is a subset of the first*
- e) the nouns are identical (synonymous)"*

30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the **Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.**

31 And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Mark 8:38

38 For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed **when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.**"

The "glorious appearing" is when Christ comes in all His power and glory, being manifest to all the world. So, in effect, Titus 2:13 says that we are watching for Christ's coming in power and glory, which is after the tribulation. This strongly implies that the rapture is after the tribulation.