

HOPE DIAMOND OR DIAMOND OF HOPE?

"Now to you who believe, this Stone is precious..." 1 Peter 2:7 (NIV)

Sitting in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, in an unbelievably secure case and under the tightest security is one of the world's largest diamonds. The Hope Diamond came from a giant uncut 112-carat stone in India in the 1600s, and after spending time in the royal French collection, it was sold and resold before finding its way into the US museum in 1958. Today it weighs 45 carats and its value is beyond estimation. To get a glimpse of this unique gem, you will need to wait your turn as it is one of the Institution's most popular exhibits.

This stone was named after a former owner, Mr. Henry Philip Hope, and has nothing to do with the desire of someone to own it, although many have hoped to do so! The title is nonetheless intriguing and directs our thoughts to another priceless Gem.

1 Peter 2 refers to the Lord Jesus Christ as a Stone rejected by many but chosen by the Father and precious to Him. It says that this Precious Stone is One that many stumble over, but for those who recognize His value and worth, they will never be put to shame. Many do not recognize the preciousness of Jesus and reject Him and His teachings, insisting on living life their own way only to stumble and, as Jesus said, be crushed in the process.

I don't know the state in which the Hope Diamond was originally discovered or how it was cut, but I understand that most uncut diamonds are not very beautiful. To unskilled eyes, it might have been rejected and tossed aside, even stumbled over. But to the jeweler who discovered its great worth, it became a gem of timeless value and one that yielded a tremendous return. Isaiah 53 tells us that the Messiah had no beauty or majesty to attract us to Him and nothing in His appearance that we should desire Him. Indeed, many in Christ's day and in our own fail to recognize the Jewel of Jesus.

Too many times we hope for the wrong diamonds and fail to recognize the One of eternal worth that is before our very eyes. In our search for earthly satisfaction, we clamor for Hope Diamonds, passing over the very Diamond we desperately hope for, the only One who can bring lasting joy and contentment and fulfill our greatest hopes. Today, let us examine with the jeweler's lens of our souls this Most Precious Stone in the entire world—not the Hope Diamond, but the Diamond of Hope: the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us discover His beauty, His worth, and His brilliance. And let us do all that we can to display Him to the world around us.

Prayer: Designer of Diamonds, I praise You for the sure hope You give to all who trust in You.

George Bowers – CBC Executive Board

Weekly Prayer Point

Philippians 1:3-7, 9-11 (NLT)

"Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. I always pray for you, and I make my requests with a heart full of joy because you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now. And I am sure that God, who began the good work within you, will continue His work until it is finally finished on that day when Christ Jesus comes back again."

"It is right that I should feel as I do about all of you, for you have a very special place in my heart. We have shared together the blessings of God..."

"I pray that your love for each other will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in your knowledge and understanding. For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until Christ returns. May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation - those good things that are produced in your life by Jesus Christ – for this will bring much glory and praise to God."

Please pray for these congregations and pastors:

- Center Hill Congregation in Kittanning, PA and Pastor Donald Peters
- Centro De Orientation Cristiana in Venezuela and Pastor Teodocio Quiroz

CBC Prayer Committee