



THREE GREAT PROPHECIES OF THE MESSIAH DOMINATE THE END TIMES

- ✓ Rapture
- ✓ Millennial Kingdom
- ✓ New Heaven & New Earth

By Dr. Thomas Haney

HOPE LOOKS UP MINISTRIES

There are three Great Prophecies of the Messiah that Dominate the End Times. First is the Rapture, Jesus is going to return one day soon to snatch away, catch up in the air or rapture the Church. Second the Millennial Kingdom, He will return to the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem and become King over all the earth and will reign for 1,000 years. Third is the New Heaven and New Earth, the first heaven and earth will pass away and a New Heaven and a New Earth will come for God's People.

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INTRODUCTION: Fear Does Not Need to Control You

Welcome to Hope Looks Up Bible Study with Dr. Tom Haney. This session is the Fourth of Four mini-series in this study titled ‘Fear Does Not Need to Control You’. These are four areas that are causing our nation and even many believers to live in fear.

First: “The Continuing Pandemic;” Second: Finances and Our Times;” Third: “What Happens from Death to the New Heaven and New Earth;” and in this study we will look at the fourth study area titled: “Three Great Prophecies of the Messiah, Dominate the End Times.” This study will answer three questions that many believers are looking for answers.

1. Rapture “Why Would Christ Come Get His Church? –
2. Millennial Kingdom “Why Would Jesus Want to Rule Over a Sinful World?
3. New Heaven & New Earth “Why Delay Something as Wonderful as the New Heaven and the New Earth?”

THE RAPTURE – Why Would Christ Come and Get His Church?

The first Great End Time Prophecy to be discussed answers the question: **“Will Jesus Rapture His Church and If So—Why?”**

Since the Rapture of the Church is not taught in all Christian Churches and, in fact, many Christian Churches are ‘amillennial’ and do not believe that the Church will be raptured by Jesus Christ or that Christ will rule on this remade earth for 1,000 years, also called the Millennial Reign of Christ; it would be good to define some of the terms that we are using and that would help us understand the topic.

What do I mean by the Rapture? I am referring to the Biblical teaching that Jesus is going to return one day soon to snatch away, catch up in the air or rapture the Church. The Greek word “harpazo” translates to the English word “catch up”. The Latin word “rapio” translates to the English word “rapture.” This is the key thought of *1 Thessalonians 4:17*, which says, “*After that, we who are still alive and are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so, we will be with the Lord forever.*” This passage fulfills several Bible promises that Jesus will take His Church up to heaven to live with Him forever.

John 14:1-4 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me, that you also may be where I Am. You know the way to the place where I am going.”

Not only did Jesus state that His believers would all live with Him in heaven, He also had Paul write this truth in:

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1 Corinthians 15:51-58 which says, “Listen, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality then the saying that is written will come true. Death has been swallowed up in victory. “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting. The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm, let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your Labor in the Lord is not in vain.”

Before and after the verse about the Church being caught up together with the Lord in the Book of Thessalonians, Paul also writes:

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 “Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uniformed about those who sleep in death, so that you grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope? For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord’s Word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so, we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.”

The Apostle Paul comforted the Thessalonians in their grief by teaching them that the Rapture is meant to encourage believers living in intense persecution that God will remove them so they will not have to endure the punishment that God will pour out on those who oppose Him in the Great Tribulation. The Great Tribulation was not intended to be a final baptism by fire for Christians to see how long it took them to succumb to the trumpet and bowl punishments. An overview of the **Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9**, shows the final battles are between the Lord and all who have succumbed to the tyranny and oppression of the Anti-Christ. It would be ludicrous to believe that God intended or wanted any of that conflict to harm and destroy His Church. There will be enough faithful martyrs, who choose Christ and death over the Anti-Christ and his style of life, the entire Church does not need to suffer God’s punishment intended for the Antichrist and his followers. I feel that is the context of the passage earlier in *1 Thessalonians* when Paul commended the Church for their faithfulness and said:

1 Thessalonians 1:9b-10 “They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.”

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Other Scriptures that also teach this are: *II Thessalonians 2:1-3; Romans 5:9; Ephesians 5:6; and Colossians 3:4.*

There are many Christians, and I am one, who believe that the second coming of Christ will be in two times and for two different reasons. The first time will be the rapture and this great event, announced and trumpeted in heaven will be the summons for Christ to come and get His Church, the bride, and bring her to heaven with Him. This will be both the living and dead Christians and it will be the Church. They will meet Christ in the air and He will transform them with glorious bodies and fit them for life in heaven. But for many on the earth it will seem as if they just disappeared. This will trigger a series of situations that arise after the Church is raptured and the end result will be that the 7-years of Tribulation will start. At the climax of these 7-years of tribulation, Jesus Christ will descend from heaven, accompanied by His bride (the Church), the saints He had raptured and together they will rule over the renewed earth and heaven for the next 1,000 years.

The term “Rapture” is a Biblical word that comes right out of the Latin Vulgate translation of the Bible. The New American Standard Version uses the English phrase “caught up”. The same phrase is used in the King James and New International Versions of the Bible.

The idea of the rapture was not revealed to the Old Testament prophets because it is a promise to the Church and not to all the other saints of God who will join the Church in heaven. Jesus will return as a bridegroom for His bride, and that bride will be the Church Age Believers.

The saints of the Old Testament times will be resurrected at the end of the Tribulation and will join all the saints from the time of Tribulation, including the martyred saints in heaven.

***Daniel 12:1-2** “At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of the nations until then. But at that time, your people, everyone whose name is found written in the book will be delivered.”*

Paul in *I Thessalonians* encourages the Church to comfort each other with the thought of the rapture. Truly, it is comforting to think that intended wrath towards the ungodly sent by God will not be realized and suffered by believers in Jesus Christ. Think again of all the promises that are a part of this Scripture:

1. Jesus will bring with Him the spirits of those who have died in Him. None are omitted.
2. Jesus will resurrect their bodies in a great miracle of re-creation and not with earthly bodies that are susceptible to all kinds of injury and decay; but with eternal bodies that will allow them to live forever with a spirit, soul, and body.
3. The believers that are alive when this day happens will not even die but will go straight from the physical to the eternal—mid-air; or Paul says from mortal to immortality—from the perishable to the imperishable.

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Defense of Rapture Teachings

All my life I have heard that there are two things no one can avoid: taxes and death. Well, that is not true. According to *1 Thessalonians 4* a whole generation of believers will escape death and I am pretty sure will not have to pay any taxes that year either.

Since, a majority of Christian Churches do not teach the rapture, there have been a lot of objections to the teaching and many who have declared it just wrong. I want to spend some time defending some of the charges against the Rapture.

1. The concept of the rapture has been criticized that it gives hope to the wrong place for a Christian. The critics say that hope should be in the Second Coming of Christ, not just to be raptured. This seems strange to call this a problem, when Jesus addressing the Church at Sardis in *Revelation 3:10* said, *“Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come to the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.”*
2. The most common objection is that the Rapture is just too new to be true. Historically, the Puritans taught the Rapture as early as the early 1600’s and shows that the concept was alive and taught long before: The Restoration Movement; the Holiness Movement; the Charismatic Movement; the veneration of Mary as the Mother of God; and a host of teachings in many different faiths were formed or taught after the teaching of the rapture. Bible prophecy stopped being taught in the church in the 400’s when Augustine spiritualizing everything in the bible, and even after the Renaissance you could be killed for disagreeing with his teachings. When the Reformation triggered a desire to bring back the literal interpretation of the Bible, Bible prophecy was once again taken seriously and within 100 years, the Rapture was being taught. Biblical truth is determined by Scripture alone, and not by how that teaching has been perceived at different times during history. Scripture tells about something that will happen and many of us see this separate from the time Christ comes with His heavenly army the Church to destroy his foes at Armageddon. Daniel was told that believers would understand more fully as the time comes for it to be fulfilled.
3. Some critics say that the Rapture teaches that after we die, we live as disembodied spirits. But the Apostle Paul explained, when raptured, our corrupted human bodies are transformed and changed into our new glorified bodies. *1 Corinthians 15:50-58* Even the martyred saints, in heaven, in *Revelation 6 and 9* are able to praise Jesus, cry out to Him and are in His presence. The Bible teaches that all glorified bodies are tangible, recognizable, and eternal, just like the body of Jesus after His resurrection.
4. The Tribulation occurring after the Church is raptured means that God cannot sort out those who are true or not true. It is amazing to think that God would not know the

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heart or a believer well enough to know if they should be raptured or not. God will spare the Church from the punishment that will come upon the earth, but He will not abandon evangelism. This is that great **70th Week of Daniel** that God and His angels like Michael will use to bring His people the Jews back into a relationship with Him and will have great times of evangelism that will sweep over the world. Why else would there be such a large number of saint martyrs under the Lamb's Throne except that they converted and were killed by those opposed to Christ. All through **Revelation** God is using many events to evangelize the world:

- a. The Rapture
 - b. Two Witnesses in Jerusalem
 - c. 144,000 Jewish Christian Evangelists
 - d. Judgments of God
 - e. Gospel Angel of **Revelation 14** who will share the Gospel with the world.
5. The concept of the Rapture makes Christians think they will be left behind. Believing in the Rapture does not add to fear for Christians. No Christian today should have any fear that they will be left behind at the Rapture. If you have accepted Jesus as your Savior, then you are secure in the promise of God for all believers. *“When Christ, who is our life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”* **Colossians 3:4**
6. Christians are hiding out waiting for the Rapture instead of evangelizing. When you truly meet a person, who believes in the Rapture of the Church, you will meet someone who is very serious about taking the Great Commission as the guide for their life. They are already living with this expectation that Jesus is returning soon, so, they are expecting three things:

- a. Evangelism excites them.
- b. Holy Living excites them
- c. The return of Christ will be their victory and joy.

The greatest mission movements were pioneered by those who lived in the hope of the Rapture.

7. Paul was only talking about hope in the end times when He was talking about the final Eternal State, not the rapture. It minimalizes what Paul says about our final home. That Jesus rules over a restored and united Heaven and Earth in the Eternal State is exciting and does provide great hope for the Christian. That is true, but that is like saying the final game of a tournament; the Super Bowl, the final World Series games are the only ones that matter and missing all the great games that led up to it. There

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are so many more victories that our Lord gave us and He wants us to find hope in each of them.

The main arguments against the Rapture have to do with the fact a person believes in something else or that it just doesn't seem right. It is the idea of escapism that I want to close with in this study.

Main Tenets of Christian Salvation

If we were going to focus on what does not seem right, then let's look more closely at the main tenets of Christian Salvation:

1. That an innocent Son of God should die so that people who have all sinned would be able to live.
2. That salvation is ours for the asking and putting Jesus in our heart, and salvation does not demand a level of deeds, works and behaviors before we can experience it.
3. That salvation in the New Testament was the result of what someone says and accepts. The word of the person being saved is valued without collaborating witnesses.
4. That God would sacrifice His Only Begotten Son for sinful people to be saved.

There is nothing about salvation that does not sound a little strange unless you have read God's Word, believed it and put it in your heart. Then everything about salvation sounds right and feels right.

The idea that we would believe in the Rapture and especially in a Pre-Tribulation Rapture sounds like escapism for many. It has often been labelled as offering an easier way for people. So, let me ask and answer my own question: "Is it escapism to believe in the Pre-Trib. Rapture? I do not think that it is justified, after all it says in **1 Thessalonians 4:18**, "*Comfort one another*" with what; with the thought of the Rapture. Is it a comfort to think of the Rapture occurring at the end of the world's worst period of destruction; natural calamities and war? Would it not be more comforting to think of a Rapture that occurs before any of these things begin?

Regardless of when the Rapture actually occurs, we need to keep in mind that the Bible teaches that societal conditions are going to grow increasingly worse the closer we get to the Lord's return and that many Christians will suffer tribulation whether or not they go through the Great Tribulation or not. And that means all of us had better be preparing ourselves for unprecedented suffering and spiritual warfare.

If you are a Christian, you can be that on a daily basis by putting on the "*full armor of God*", **Ephesians 6:13**, praying at all times as the spirit has directed you, that you will be able to stand firm against the attacks of Satan.

Ephesians 5:14-18 "*Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of*

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people in their deceitful scheming. Instead speak the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of hm who is the head, that is Christ. From Him the whole body is joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. “

If you are not in Christ, your only hope is to reach out in faith and receive the free gift of God’s salvation which He has provided through His son, Jesus. *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life.”* **John 3:16**

I pray you have that everlasting life in Jesus Christ.

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MILLENNIAL KINGDOM - Why Would Jesus Want to Rule Over a Sinful World?

The three great prophecies of the Messiah Jesus Christ through the End Times have led to some fear among Christians and non-Christians. Most Christians would like to believe that Jesus comes to this earth, gets all the Christians and takes them to this beautiful New Heaven and New Earth where they live forever without another thought or worry. The idea of Christ ruling for 1,000 years over the earth just does not sound like heaven. So, as we study that special prophetic time when Jesus comes to this earth, first to defeat His enemies and the enemies of His people, and then to oversee the set-up for the Millennial Kingdom, and finally to rule over the earth for the 1,000 years; we will first try to establish what Scripture says will happen and then answer some of the whys that might have formed in your mind.

I believe that when Christ returns, He will first take His bride, the Church, from this earth. Our homecoming with Christ will occur at the Rapture when our Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, comes to take us back to His Father's House.

For those who have rejected God's free gift of salvation, the wrath of God will be poured out in the Tribulation. Following those years of increasing horror, Jesus Christ will descend from heaven in the same manner that He was caught up in the sight of the Apostles. He will set foot on land on the Mount of Olives and speak a supernatural word that will destroy the Antichrist and the armies gathered near Megiddo, Armageddon is the name we commonly use. Most people seem to know those two major events; Jesus descends and speaks a word that destroys the enemies of God who are also the enemies of God's people. But, none of the prophecies end with that statement or add that "Jesus then returned to heaven with His bride the Church."

What Will Happen After the Enemies of God are Defeated?

The passage in ***Zechariah 14*** goes ahead with very specific events that will happen and they are all tied to the same names for the same places that we still use today. Listen as I spell out the events from ***Zechariah 14*** that will happen after the enemies of Jesus are defeated:

1. The Kidron Valley, a rolling valley between the Mount of Olives and the Old Walls of Jerusalem, will split in two.
2. Jesus will enter the city of Jerusalem through the Golden Gate (or Eastern Gate).
3. Jesus will ascend to the Temple Mount, and that may still be different than commonly thought.
4. Jesus will take His seat on the throne of His father, David.
5. For 1000 years, Jesus will reign over the earth, flooding it with peace, righteousness, and holiness.
6. He will put down a final rebellion instigated by the Devil and cast death and Hades into a lake of fire.

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7. At that point, the redeemed will enter the eternal state of the New Heaven and the New Earth and time will cease to have meaning. It will begin a period that will never end.

That plan was foreordained by God, which is why He could reveal it to His servants, the prophets. Though not yet realized, that sequencing of events is as certain as any historical fact, because our God has declared the beginning and the end. He is our Alpha and Omega, our Creator and Sustainer and the One who will welcome us into His eternal presence or cast us into everlasting destruction because we refused to accept Him as our Savior.

Glorious Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ

Jesus, the Word of God that was there from the beginning, **John 1:1-3**; He is the one through whom all things have been created, **Colossians 1:15-17**; He was the one who finished all that needed done for our salvation on the cross and hands us justified to God the Father, **Romans 5:9**; and has promised to come back again for us, **Revelation 22:7, 12, & 20**.

Let's take a closer look at the passage in **Zechariah 14:1-9**.

“A day of the Lord is coming, Jerusalem, when your possessions will be plundered and divided up within your very walls. I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city. Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights on a day of battle. On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him. On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem, half of it east to the Dead Sea and half of it west to the Mediterranean Sea, in summer and in winter. The Lord will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one Lord, and his name the only name.” **Zechariah 14:1-9**

Let's follow this Scripture as we study the Glorious Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. As the final years of Tribulation unfold, the Jews have made a disastrous pact with the false messiah, **Daniel 9:27**; known in Daniel as the foolish shepherd or the Antichrist.
2. In the middle of that seven-year covenant, Antichrist will break his treaty with Israel and require the worship of himself alone, **Daniel 9:24-27**; **Matthew 24:15**; **II Thessalonians 2:3,4**.
3. When Israel refuses, the armies of the world will gather to do battle, climaxing in the great siege of Jerusalem and the battle of Armageddon, **Revelation 19**.

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4. Following the Lord’s victory at that battle, **Revelation 19:11-16**, Israel will be fully restored as spoken of in **Hosea 14:4-7; Joel 3:18-21; Amos 9:13-15; Micah 4:1-3; and Zephaniah 3:14-20**.

This passage begins with the phrase, “*The Day of the Lord*” and it is a technical term for God’s wrath being unleashed against sinners. Here, Zechariah is looking at the Day of the Lord when His wrath is unleashed against the whole world of sinners, which will finally result in the establishment of the Lord’s millennial reign on the earth.

Zechariah describes a time when the armies of the world are in such control of Jerusalem that they are dividing the spoil they have gotten from the looting of the Jews in the middle of the street. This moves God to start “*The Day of the Lord*” as He sends His wrath against such brazen people. God has gathered all these nations to purge, refine and judge them, **Revelation 16:13,14, 16**. Their presence makes a bad time for Jerusalem even worse, but this is the climax of “*the time of Jacob’s trouble*,” **Jeremiah 30:5-7**.

To prevent any more harm to his chosen remnant and to keep them from being eradicated from the earth, the Lord will personally intervene to fight against the gathered nations, just as He fought for His people in the past. Jesus will literally return to the Mount of Olives, the very same mount the apostles saw Him ascend into heaven, **Acts 1:11**.

Jesus Return Brings Change to the Earth

It is at this time that the restructuring of the earth will take place and it will be like the Garden of Eden times in many aspects; it will be a new topography that has never been seen before. It will be different than the earth of creation; the earth after the world is destroyed by the flood; and it will be unlike the topography of the New Heaven and the New Earth. It begins with the Mount of Olives literally being split in two and one-half of the mountain moving north and one-half south. This will create a valley that is running east and west and has been a part of many prophecies: **Micah 1:2-4; Nahum 1:5; Revelation 16:18,19, & 20** all speak of a time when God will reshape this earth. This will allow everyone who is in the city that wants to escape, to escape. As these Jewish believers are fleeing the city through the valley, the Bible says a most interesting thing will happen, the lights will go out. **Isaiah 13:9, 10:23-24; Joel 2:10; 3:14-16; Matt. 24:29-30; and Revelation 6:12-14**. The light of the earth after it goes out will be replaced by the light of Christ’s glory, **Isaiah 60:19-20**. Only the lord knows the fullness of the plan for that day, when the lights go out and then are lit again in the millennial kingdom, **Isaiah 30:26**; and **Malachi 4:1-3**.

Zechariah tells us of some of the changes of topography that will happen in the area of Israel and Jerusalem. Presently the Mount of Olives is 300 feet higher than the temple mount in Jerusalem; but the topographical alterations described in verses 4 and 10 will allow the spring to flow out of the Temple area toward the Dead Sea on the East and to the Mediterranean Sea on the West. It will not dry up in summer, as most Israeli and Palestinian streams do now, but will flow all year, making the desert “*blossom as the rose*”. **Isaiah 35:1** The topographical change will occur all over

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the earth and when it is done, the Temple Mount in Jerusalem will be the highest mountain in the world. The temperature will moderate all over the world with no mountain ranges, the land mass will change and all islands will reattach to one large earth continent. I personally believe that when God replaces the light source with Jesus that will allow the removal of the sun, moon and other heavenly bodies to change the way that people age and God will create an environment that will allow most people to live the entire 1,000 years of the Millennial Kingdom.

Changes that Mark the 1000-Year Millennial Kingdom

But other changes will mark this 1,000-year time period and one of them will be that there will be only one religion in the entire world, **Revelation 11:15**, Christ will have done away with all the false religions started by the Evil One. This will be the ultimate fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant and will be the basis of the fulfilment of:

1. A King from the tribe of Judah, like David.
2. The path for Jewish and Gentile reconciliation and working together spiritually.
3. Jesus will return as the one who will fulfill and complete each of these great prophetic goals.

Zechariah is writing prophecy for the Israelites so he explains what will happen in the Holy Land area. The countryside will become one continuous plain and Jerusalem shall rise above it and house both the Temple of God and the throne of Jesus Christ, **Ezekiel 40-48**. This will not only be true of this area but as we have already seen, it will be true of the one continent period. Jerusalem and especially the Temple Mount will rise like a diamond above all the rest of the Millennial earth.

Jerusalem, the city of peace, has been fought over more frequently than any other city on earth, and prayed for over the millennia, **Psalms 122:6-9**. It will be a place of permanent righteousness with peace, rest, and safety.

The passage of Zechariah continues to show how God will slow the forces that move against Jerusalem and says that God will use some of the same means He used to thwart the enemies of the Israelites in earlier battles. He will cause plagues on them, stir confusion in their camps, cause their animals to be affected by the plague and unable to be used in military campaigns and then points out that they will be completely destroyed by the Messiah, **Revelation 19:11-16** when He has His bride come to earth in the Glorious Coming.

As we learned about the Rapture, the vast majority of Christians in the world today attend churches that teach the Amillennial viewpoint about the end times, a view that says Jesus will never return to this earth to reign over all the nations in the world. Instead, he will just appear in the heavens and take all believers back to Heaven with Him. But we have clearly seen that He will return to the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem and will become King over all the earth. The book of **Revelation, Chapter 20** says that He will reign for 1,000 years, six times.

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What Will the Redeemed be Doing During the Millennium?

I would be remiss if I do not explain to you why this will be important and what is going to happen. During the Lord's reign, the Redeemed are going to be doing anything but floating around on clouds, playing harps and singing. We are going to reign with Jesus over those who are allowed to enter the Millennium, in the flesh, which will be those believers who are alive at the end of the Tribulation. Jesus will reign over all the earth from Jerusalem, **Isaiah 2:1-4** as King of kings and Lord of lords., **Revelation 19:16**. David, in his glorified body, will reign as king of Israel, **Ezekiel 37:24**. Those of us who will be glorified saints will be scattered all over the earth to assist with the reign of Jesus, **II Timothy 2:12**.

Think of it, every person on earth who is in a position of governing authority will be a glorified saint. Some of us will be in administrative positions, sharing in Jesus' reign as presidents, governors, or mayors, **Luke 19:11-27**. Others will serve as judges, I **Corinthians 6:3**. Most of us will serve as shepherds or teachers, trying to bring those who are born during the Millennium to faith in Jesus, **Isaiah 66:18-21** and **Jeremiah 3:15**.

None of us will serve as legislators because the law will be given by Jesus Himself, and it will be perfect, **Isaiah 2:1-4**. There will be no abomination known as the world legislatures or even a United States Congress. Nor will there be any lobbyists or political parties.

The Lord will rule with “a rod of iron”, **Psalms 2:9** and **Revelation 2:27**. The government of the world will again be a theocracy, with Jesus serving as both the spiritual and political leader. *“It is He who will build the temple of the Lord, and He will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on His throne. And He will be a priest on His throne. And there will be harmony between the two.”* **Zechariah 6:13**.

We will be given the blessing of seeing this sin-sick world flooded with peace, righteousness and justice, *“They will neither harm nor destroy on my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”* **Isaiah 11:9** There will be no homeless people or hungry people, *“They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people, my chosen ones will long enjoy the work of their hands.”* **Isaiah 65:21-22** and **Micah 4:4**, *“Everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the Lord Almighty has spoken.”*

Peace will envelope the earth, *“He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hoods. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.”* **Isaiah 2:4**. The Lord's reign will be characterized by righteousness, fairness, and faithfulness, *“But with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips, he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt, and faithfulness the sash around his waist.”* **Isaiah 11:4-5**

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It will be a time like no other for the Bible prophecies say that, *“All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, for dominion belongs to the Lord and He rules over the nations.”* **Psalms 22:27-28**

To fully grasp how great this prophecy is for every believer, we need to realize that Jesus, God the Father, and the Holy Spirit have done so many things in our life and the life of the earth that will make this a more blessed time. Our life on this earth is a lot like our life in the womb. We are bound by the environment in which we inhabit. The walls of the womb limit us to see what awaits us out in the real world; and the limits of physical life here on this earth limit us to see what could happen when the limits are gone.

Reminder of What Happens When We Die

1. We are ushered right to Jesus, **Luke 16:22** and nothing will ever be the same.
2. We receive an intermediate body that will house our spirit during this time period. We will have a need for clothing and the Bible calls that our “physical intermediate body” prepared for that special time period.
3. We will never remain bodiless, neither are we ever left unconscious. **Luke 16**, a story of Jesus tells us both the Rich Man and Lazarus were dwelling in bodies that could feel, see and talk. They existed fully conscious and never dormant due to any kind of soul sleep. Only the earthly, mortal body remains ‘asleep’ in the grave awaiting the Resurrection.
4. We are resurrected into our glorified body. **Philippians 3:20-21**.
5. Our glorified bodies are full of glory. What does that mean: *“Our glorified bodies cannot be destroyed? We will become immortal. We will live forever. We will be mighty and powerful. We will be Spirit-controlled rather than sin-controlled, for the sin nature will have died along with our earthly bodies. We will exist as tangible beings, in that we can touch and feel other glorified bodies just as the disciples could touch and feel Jesus after He was resurrected.”* **Luke 24:41-43, John 20:27-28**

It is this reset from the mortal to immortal, from the perishable to the imperishable, that allows all these prophecies to become reality. We will finally have a body capable of standing in the presence of the Shekinah glory of Almighty God. We can look upon the loving face of our Creator and at last enjoy perfect fellowship with Him. Our mortality reset also resets God’s children into the ultimate fulfillment of a right relationship with Him. It hard to wait for this great transition through our resurrection.

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NEW HEAVEN & NEW EARTH - Why Delay the New Heaven & New Earth?

May God give us eyes to see all that He is providing new for us in the final End Times Prophecy about Christ. He will present to His followers and believers **“A New Heaven and A New Earth”**. As I have studied and written about the views of Heaven recorded in the Book of Revelation, it became obvious that John was first, writing about a working heaven, from which Jesus controlled and directed the Universe. It is the ‘control center’ for all that was happening and all that was to happen. As the views of heaven end while life is still on the earth; it became obvious that the New Heaven and the New Earth were special. They were not only made by Jesus for eternity, they were also prepared as a special gift for His believers. I have called that New Heaven a **“Reward Heaven”** and that New Earth a **“Reward Earth”**. It is the place where everything is created and made for the eternal life of God and His followers. A place where time will have no significance and all the measures that we use now will be useless trivia from a former way of living.

I’m sure you are in agreement with me so far on what I am saying, but may have the same question that I once had; “If this will be such a wonderful place and be such an exciting reward, then why are we not getting to it as soon as possible?” Most of us are not excited with several parts of life that grow old. We don’t enjoy growing old ourselves. I’m almost at the point of throwing away all my 10 power and stronger mirrors and going back to just a plain simple, regular power mirror. I really don’t want to see how large the pores are getting; how errant the hair is growing; how hair no longer grows in the places I want it to grow; I don’t want to see every wrinkle as large as it can get; and for heaven’s sake, don’t magnify those blemishes.

Whether we see ourselves up close or not, those same blemishes are there on full display every day. These days more men are hiding behind prodigious beards and long hair. I recently saw what I thought might be the most foolish men’s hair style I have ever seen. It is called a circle beard, and it consists of a small width of hair in a continuous circle from the top of the head to the lower part of the neck. I looked at ten examples and could not see how any one of them made the man look anything but foolish.

Ladies are able to conceal certain perceived flaws with makeup. But from a very young age we find that physically we are winding down. The author of Ecclesiastes recognized the apparent futility of this life: *“Vanity of vanities! All is vanity.”* **Ecclesiastes 1:2** This book is attributed to Solomon; so, if the wisest man who ever lived, who was blessed with riches and a kingdom that expanded Israel’s borders and wealth, lamented such pointlessness, what aspiration for meaning can we get out of the items of this life?

I would say for those who are anxious for everything to turn to the new, we need to realize that God has a plan and that plan is the very best possible way for all the new things to appear. God knows when and how He wants them to be presented that will bless us the most.

How often have you heard someone say, “Well, at least in heaven I know I will be thin!” Or “I know I won’t have to look this way in heaven!” Or, my favorite, “I plan to be 21 years old all of my

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life in heaven!” Pessimism can stem from perceiving too vividly or feeling too deeply. Maybe Thomas, the doubting Apostle had some very disappointing things occur in his life and that kept his skeptical side very active and his trusting side very passive. Jesus did not harshly condemn his skepticism, but gently encouraged him to embrace evidence of greater realities. History offers numerous examples of great men and women who struggle with depression: Abraham Lincoln, William Tecumseh Sherman, Ernest Hemingway; and Winston Churchill all suffered from what used to be called deep bouts of melancholy. Sometimes, extensive book knowledge can isolate us from the reality of the world around us. The response of King Festus to Paul, after Paul had given his testimony was to call out in a loud voice, *“Paul, you are out of your mind! Your great learning is driving you mad.” Acts 26:24.* Paul did not deny the idea that great learning could undermine a firm grasp of what is real. Instead, he replied, *“I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I utter words of sober truth.”* Paul testified to what he had personally experienced and what he knew King Agrippa would understand based on his own knowledge of current events and the prophets.

It is also possible for feelings to become so intense that they weigh in upon us continually. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a clinical term for the condition where a terrifying or shocking experience can cause memories of those traumatic experiences and the feelings, they caused that can trigger flashbacks, nightmares, and severe anxiety. People who suffer from PTSD sometimes have a hard time connecting emotionally out of subconscious fear that they may be hurt again. Other sensitive souls look around at the unending stretches of human suffering and lose hope.

We live in an era where the manifestations of discouragement and despair are evident all around us. Prolonged homelessness, drug addiction, and suicide have reached epidemic levels. Even young people, typically brimming with hope and eager to find their place in the world are falling victim to unchecked amorality that finally produces nihilism. “nihilism” the rejection of all religious and moral principles, is the belief that life is meaningless. Many are embracing anti-social behavior, shouting out anarchist propaganda, and resorting to suicide. COVID has not helped either, but even before COVID, teen suicide rates had increased 60% in the preceding ten years.

It is in the prophetic Word that Jesus found His hope. Jesus, when He was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted. responded to the Devil’s temptations by quoting from the Old Testament, the circumstances and the quotes are:

1. **Hunger** - *“Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” Deuteronomy 8:3*
2. **Recognition of His role as Messiah** - *“You shall not put the Lord your God to the test” Deuteronomy 6:16*
3. **Worship of the World** - *“You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only” Deuteronomy 6:13*

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Jesus’s knowledge of the Word of God sure makes me realize that I have not studied Deuteronomy enough! Likewise, when Jesus started His public ministry in Galilee, He stood in the synagogue at Nazareth and read from Isaiah:

Luke 4:18-19 *“The Spirit of the lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.”*

When we begin to look at what is new, we have to take the entire Bible and see what it says about what is on the earth. The point of this is to encourage us to all study, ALL of God’s Word. Jesus said it best when He said, *“Do not think that I came to abolish the law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.”* **Matthew 5:17-18**

But wait, there is more to focus on. It is not just a matter of the new of the New Heaven and the New Earth replacing what we do not like or the effects sin and the fallen nature of mankind has produced; Jesus will also make new all the things that we like here on the earth.

Jesus Will Make All Things New

Follow with me in **Revelation 21**. John saw a new heaven and a new earth. Speaking of the coming future in the past terms, he observed that the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and there was no longer any sea. He watched as New Jerusalem came down out of heaven. The voice of God validated the name of the city foretold by Ezekiel, *“Yahweh Shammah,”* - The Lord is there. **Ezekiel 48:35**. He wrote: *“Behold, the Tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people and God Himself will be among them”* **Revelation 21:3**

The Lord promised some very specific things: there will no longer be *“any mourning, or crying, or pain, the first things have passed away.”* **Revelation 21:4** Have you thought of all the changes that would have to come to make that statement possible,? There are many:

1. No death
2. No funerals
3. No loss
4. No physical hurt
5. No emotional hurt
6. No sense of betrayal, leaving or unfairness
7. Nothing will upset you, discourage you or cause you pain in any way.

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You will have to be altered, your way of looking at things must be altered, and the situations that caused you upset now will not be allowed to happen.

Then He said, *“Behold, I am making all things new. Write for these things are faithful and true.”*

Revelation 21:4-5 We know that we are promised glorified bodies, which will be like Jesus’ body following His resurrection. They will not wear out or grow old. They will be unfettered by time or space and yet will be able to enjoy food and touch. We covered a lot about our glorified bodies in the lessons on: “What Happens When You Die?” and “What are Deceased Christians Doing Now.” Let’s review the major changes to the body and then take a closer look at some of the other things that will become new.

Major changes to the body when we receive the glorified eternal body:

1. It will be raised imperishable, **I Corinthians 15**, which means that the body will not be able to be destroyed in any way. It will be totally indestructible.
2. It will be raised in glory, **I Corinthians 15**, which means it will only be able to think pure thoughts.
3. It will be raised in power, **I Corinthians 15**, which means it cannot get sick or tired.
4. It is raised a spiritual body, **I Corinthians 15**, which means that we will always be in a Holy Spirit powered body.
5. We will exist as tangible beings that can touch and feel other glorified bodies.
6. We will be recognizable, just as Jesus was, and we will have no weaknesses of any sort.
7. Will we fly, probably, since heaven will be a 1,500-mile cube and it would be almost impossible to get around the city unless you were able to navigate through flight. Also, Jesus was able to fly and to just appear and disappear after He received His glorified body.
8. We will have nothing about our body that will be weakened; so, the ability to taste, touch, smell, hear and see will all and always be at the very pinnacle of our ability to have or use them.
9. Perhaps we will be able to see colors that were outside our light spectrum and see ultraviolet colors; savor tastes that were not ours to taste in this life; smell as good—no even better than our dog; and hear sounds that were impossible for us to hear in a human body.
10. We will have a body capable of being in the presence of God, gazing upon Him and still not dying.

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What Will Be New on The New Heaven and The New Earth?

Let us look at some of the things that will be new in the new heaven and the new earth.

1. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth; but in the eternal state, a new heaven and a new earth await us. **Revelation 21:1-2**
2. In the beginning, the sun and moon were created as two great lights, **Genesis 1:16-17**; but in the eternal state with the eternal city there is no longer any need for such light, for the glory of God and the Lamb lights up the eternal city of the redeemed, **Revelation 21:23; 22:5**
3. In the beginning, God created the night, **Genesis 1:5**; but in the eternal state, it will be a night less eternity. **Revelation 22:5**
4. In the beginning, human beings were able to be tempted; but Satan will be perpetually quarantined from the people of God, **Revelation 20:10** and we will be raised pure and incapable of ever sinning or even being tempted.
5. In the beginning, God pronounced a curse following humankind's fall into sin; but in the eternal state, there will be no more sin and no more curse **Revelation 22:3**
6. In the beginning paradise was lost; but in the eternal state, paradise will be gloriously restored for redeemed humans, **Romans 8:19-21; Revelation 2:7**
7. In the beginning, Adam and Eve were barred from the tree of life; but in the eternal state, redeemed humans will enjoy the restoration of the tree of life. **Revelation 2:7; and 22:2, 14, 19.**
8. In the beginning, tears, death, and mourning were a part of the human life; but in the eternal state, tears, death and mourning will be forever absent from the redeemed, **Isaiah 25:8, Revelation 21:4**
9. In the beginning, a Redeemer was promised; but in the eternal state, the victorious Redeemer reigns, **Revelation 10:1-6; 21:2-27; 22:3-5.**

The great news is that we can experience all of this because of what Jesus has done for us in salvation. We can't earn it. We can't be good enough to deserve it. We can't make ourselves worthy of it. But each of us, fallen sinners every one, can participate in this grand reversal because of the salvation we have in Jesus,

Ephesians 2:8-10 *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast, for we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."*

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What Has Jesus Done for You?

Never forget what Jesus Christ has done for you. The Bible ‘The Jesus Book’ tells us all about it.

1. We are saved in Christ, **Hebrews 7:25**
2. We are forgiven in Christ, **Ephesians 1:6-7**
3. We are justified in Christ, **I Corinthians 6:11**
4. We are reconciled in Christ, **Colossians 1:20**
5. We are redeemed in Christ. **Ephesians 1:7**
6. We are made alive in Christ. **Romans 6:11**
7. We are brought near in Christ. **Ephesians 2:13**
8. We have eternal life in Christ. **Romans 5:21**

What’s In the New Heaven and New Earth?

In the New Heaven and New Earth, the Garden of Eden will be prophetically represented by the eternal tree of life, whether an actual tree or the realization that eternity is permanent, it will represent that eternal life comes from the eternal river of life, nourishing the trees of life and the source of all is God. However, the New Heaven is not a Garden, but a great city where human cultures in all of their diversity will live. Why Jerusalem? It was the first and only city where God resided in a permanent holy house, the first city where kings worship the true Creator and It is the ultimate Promised Land of all restored creation. It will be ruled by a divine king and will be built by God and not by human hands.

When John describes this New Heaven, **Revelation 21:15-21**, called New Jerusalem, he is very careful to explain that it has no Temple, because the presence of God and the Lamb shall eliminate the need for a Temple. It will have all the symbolism to tie the Old Testament Tribes with the New Testament Apostles to show that the New Heaven will be made by God to accommodate all of His believers from every covenant and every age. The picture John paints of the New Jerusalem is a combination of the prophecies in **Ezekiel 40** and **I Kings 6:19-20**.

The fullness of God’s presence will be everywhere. All of the new creation will be God’s Holy of Holies.

Our Hope of Heaven is About Being with Jesus!

One last thought as we talk about why the delay to enter the New Heaven and the New Earth. The Church has taken a very clear Biblical teaching and perverted it. Almost to a Christian, and certainly in all denominations we speak about “going to heaven.” Did you know that the phrase, “Go or going to heaven” is never found in the Bible, Old or New Testament? We speak of that as the destination of Christians, so we over focus on what makes up heaven. The Bible has a lot to

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say about what happens to God’s people when they die. When the Bible speaks of what Jesus’ followers will experience after they die and it is not heaven as the reward.

Let’s begin with Jesus, who on the cross told the repentant criminal being crucified next to him, *“today you’ll be with me in paradise.”* **Luke 23:42-43**

Paul discussed his possible execution in a Roman prison and he said death wouldn’t be so bad. It would make the Philippians sad, but he would get to be “with Christ.”

Paul talked about the true hope that drives Christian faithfulness, even in the face of death. The result of death, he said was being “with the Lord.” **II Corinthians 5:6-9**

It is not hard to see that the consistent factor is not that people will “go to heaven.” It is what these Biblical examples all say in the same phrase: Our hope is about being “with Jesus.” Both Jesus and Paul believed that not even death could separate people from God’s love, and that Jesus’ followers would be with him after death.

I wonder if that would help us have all the answers we need and totally eliminate any fears about “The New Heaven and The New Earth”; if all believers wanted to just be with the Lord. It will be our strongest tie in all of eternity.