

Through this book, "Perspective In Prophecy: A Pastoral Expose Of The Biblical End Times" I provide for my fellow believers the means of both learning in-depth Biblical prophecy, along with creating the platform for them to share with others our "blessed hope" in Jesus (Titus 2:13). These are my personal teaching messages on the 'End Times' and they present the relevancy of the inspired scriptures for our generation. I believe that absolute truth is found in the revelation of the Bible, and this is more than sufficient to encourage the true believer in their faith as we are living through the events long foretold that would precede the culmination of this age, leading to the return of Jesus in His Second Coming.



PERSPECTIVE IN PROPHECY

JAMES PANNAFINO

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A PASTORAL EXPOSE OF THE BIBLICAL END TIMES

JAMES PANNAFINO

This book is dedicated to all who have encouraged my journey of faith throughout these past 44 years, and especially to my beloved parents, and my life partner and wife, Suzanne.

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Preface

As a pastor/teacher it is my personal calling and determined purpose to equip my fellow believers, the saints, for the work of their own ministry in these days that we are living in (see Ephesians 4:11-16).

Through this book, “**Perspective In Prophecy: A Pastoral Expose Of The Biblical End Times**” I hope to give my fellow believers the means of both learning Biblical prophecy, along with creating the platform for them to share with others our “blessed hope” (Titus 2:13).

Throughout my sermon outline notes of messages on the ‘End Times’ I present the relevancy of the inspired scriptures for our generation, along with the clarity of what has been revealed so that it can be easily shared with others.

I believe that absolute truth is only found in the revelation of the Bible, and this is more than sufficient to encourage the true believer in their faith as we are living through the events long foretold that would precede the culmination of this age, leading to the return of Jesus in His Second Coming.

Philippians 3:20-21 (NIV) *But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.*

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Why Every Christian Should Be A Student of Bible Prophecy

2 Peter 1:21

*For prophecy never came by the will of man,
but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*

Prophecy is a major part of divine revelation...

- Most people are surprised to learn that at least 27% of the Bible was prophecy at the time it was given. This means that believers have to understand something about prophecy to comprehend the message of the Bible.
- Many Christians read their Bible faithfully, but really have no idea what they're reading because they lack an overall framework for evaluating the pieces and putting them in the proper place.
- Knowing what has been revealed through Bible prophecy really makes it possible to understand the totality of God's inspired revelation!

God promises a special blessing to those who study and pay attention to prophecy, especially the Book of Revelation...

Revelation 1:3 *Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.*

- When people think of Bible prophecy, the first book they think of is Revelation.
- This is the only book in the Bible that contains this specific promise.
- Revelation is the final book of the Bible and it records the consummation of God's program for man and the world.

Jesus Christ is the primary subject of prophecy...

Revelation 19:10 *I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*

- Jesus is the center of theology because all of the great purposes of God depend on His person and work. What is true of theology in general is especially true of eschatology, (i.e., Bible prophecy), because its very essence is to give witness to Jesus!
- Both the OT and NT convincingly foretell of His coming, first as Messiah/Savior, and soon returning as our great King of Kings to reign over all the earth. Bible prophecy finds its beginning and end in the person and work of our Savior, Jesus.
- The very first prophecy in the Bible in Genesis 3:15 is about His coming as the Deliverer who will crush the head of the serpent (Satan).

Enoch's ancient prophecy recorded in the NT prophesied the Second Coming of Christ in overwhelming victory...

Jude 1:14-15 *Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”*

Prophecy gives us a proper perspective in life...

Throughout the Bible God presents the evidence of both His reality and power. In declaring what is future, His sovereignty over history is validated.

- Bible prophecy is important because it tells us the end of the story.
- It reveals that just as our world had a definite beginning (Genesis 1:1), it will also have an ending.

This world will not continue on forever through infinite cycles of events and experiences...

- History is not an endless recurrence of reincarnations, karma, birth, life and death.
- It reveals to us that there is a purpose and goal for this world, creation, man, and the events of everyday life. Knowing this truth gives us meaning, perspective and purpose and helps us not to be cynical about life.
- Bible prophecy is the vehicle God has given us to reveal the grand consummation of history and to provide an objective for our thinking about life, and its ultimate meaning and purpose.

Revelation 22:7 *Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.*

Ecclesiastes 3:11 *He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.*

Prophecy is an effective means for evangelism...

Bible prophecy is a subject with universal interest and it holds a unique place of intrigue, even for unbelievers.

- Everyone is wondering what is going to happen to this world?
- There's no doubt that people are fascinated with the future with New Age psychics astrologers make a living preying upon man's innate interest in the future.
- Former president Dwight Eisenhower once said, "I'm interested in the future, because that's where I'm going to spend the remainder of my life."

All people, regardless of religion or beliefs, have the same basic questions about where all these social and political upheavals are heading us to...

- Are these the last days for mankind as we know it?

- Will the human race survive?
- Is there life after death?
- The Bible answers all of these ultimate questions about our future, and we should use this natural fascination as a bridge to share the gospel with the lost.

Daniel 12:8-9 *Then I said, "My lord, what shall be the end of these things?" And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end."*

Prophecy helps protect people from false teachers...

Think of all those people who propagate apostate theology (especially regarding the last days), and have gained a following by appealing to Bible prophecy:

- William Miller was a date setter who gained a large following by predicting that Jesus was coming back in October 22, 1844. He then revised the date to 1845, and sadly brought much disillusionment to his followers when Christ didn't come.
- The Jehovah's Witnesses have often appealed to Bible prophecies (date sitting) of the future to deceptively gain a listening ear... all their predictions have failed!
- Most all pseudo-christian cults appeal to their followers by falsely claiming that somehow they are the fulfillment of Bible prophecies for the last days... none have held to be true.

This is exactly what Jesus warned us about...

Matthew 24:24-25 *For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand.*

A proper view of Bible prophecy and the last days protects God's people from all kinds of harmful, heretical teachings...

- Unfortunately, because much of the church has not heeded the warnings from the scripture, many of today 'christians' are actually following "*another (false) gospel*" (2 Corinthians 11:4) that has been declared by false prophets/teachers.

Prophecy helps us understand today's world...

The rapidly increasing tempo of change in modern life has given many a sense of impending crisis.

- Modern man is asking questions about the future as never before. They are solemn questions; they are searching questions. The Bible is certainly the best place to look for answers.

Even the most skeptical person can put Bible prophecy to the test by noting the literal, precise fulfillment of past prophecies, as well as prophecies being fulfilled in today...

Matthew 24:7-8 *For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows (literally, ‘birth pangs’).*

In order to accurately predict the future one must be: omniscient (know everything), omnipresent (be present everywhere), and omnipotent (possess all power)...

- Only the True God of creation can accurately predict the future.

Isaiah 44:6-8 (NIV) *“This is what the LORD says— Israel’s King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God. Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out before me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come—yes, let them foretell what will come. Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one.”*

In a world of chaos and confusion, what an encouragement it is to know that God is in control...

- The hundreds of prophecies that have come to pass exactly as the Bible has said, prove that it is the inspired Word of the Lord, and nothing else compares to His truth.

Note: Why Every Christian Should Be A Student of Bible Prophecy primary credit to Dr. Mark Hitchcock’s book **“The End” Chapter 1: Don’t Stop Thinking About Tomorrow**, pp. 3-21.

The Prophetic Landscape Of Our Postmodern World

Matthew 25:13

*Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour
in which the Son of Man is coming.*

#1. Understanding of Bible Prophecy...

The Bible specifically says we cannot know the exact time of the Lord's return for His true church. But the Scriptures make it equally clear that we can know the season of the Lord's return...

Matthew 24:33-34 *So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.*

In the Last Days of this current dispensation (i.e., the Church Age) most people will be unaware of the lateness of the hour...

1 Thessalonians 5:1-3 *But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape...*

But true church of the Lord will be clearly distinguished from the false apostate 'church' and the world at-large...

1 Thessalonians 5:4-6 *But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.*

Furthermore, the Bible gives us many signs to watch for, evidence that will signal that Jesus is ready to return...

- The wise follower of the Lord will give serious study to, and know what time it is on God's prophetic clock.
- The writer of the Hebrews letter referred to these signs when he proclaimed that believers should encourage one another when they see the "Day" of His glorious return drawing near (see Hebrews 10:25-27).

#2. The Miraculous Return of Israel...

The Bible distinctly predicts the return of the Jewish people, against all odds, to their ancient homeland in the last days, which the Lord has supernaturally orchestrated.

Jeremiah 16:14-15 *“Therefore behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “that it shall no more be said, ‘The LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,’ but, ‘The LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north and from all the lands where He had driven them.’ For I will bring them back into their land which I gave to their fathers.*

- Regathering of the Jews foretold (Isaiah 11:10-12)
- Reclamation of the land of Israel (Ezekiel 36:34-35)
- Sovereignty of Jerusalem once again (Luke 21:24)
- Israel will be at the epicenter of world politics (Zechariah 12:3)
- Russian, Iran and Turkey will be a military threat to Israel (Ezekiel 38-39)
- The testimony of divine intervention (Ezekiel 39:7)

The promise of God is that once Israel is restored back to their land they will never to be removed again...

Amos 9:14-15 (NIV) *I will bring my people Israel back from exile... I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them,” says the LORD your God.*

#3. Love of Many Growing Cold...

All you have to do is look at the news to see how lovers of self and haters of others has exploded in our world!

Jesus spoke explicitly of this sign expanding worldwide at the end of this age...
Matthew 24:12 *And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.*

The last days will be a time of increasing loveless delusion and deceit...

- This will be the status quo for the world all about us, and sadly within the church too.

2 Timothy 3:1-5 *But know this, that in the last days perilous (stressful, fierce) times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!*

- Increasing despair (2 Timothy 3:1)
- Increasing materialism (2 Timothy 3:2)
- Increasing influence of Humanism (2 Timothy 3:2)
- Calling evil good and good evil (2 Timothy 3:3)
- Increasing hedonism (2 Timothy 3:4)
- A false form of spirituality (2 Timothy 3:5)

A surprising and seemingly contradictory fact of today’s postmodern spirituality...

Even in the midst of a decaying culture there would be growth in religious pluralism and woke Christianity that denies the essentials of true Biblical faith.

For the remnant believer, our primary calling remains, to grow in our love for the Lord, while striving to share His great mercy with others...

Revelation 2:4-5 (NIV) (to the church of Ephesus)

But I have this complaint against you. You don't love me or each other as you did at first! Look how far you have fallen! Turn back to me and do the works you did at first.

#4. The Rise of False Teachers Corrupting The 'Church'

Along With A True Revival Outpouring Worldwide...

2 Thessalonians 2:3 *Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away (gr. apostasia) comes first.*

- There has undoubtedly been a falling away from the faith, especially in America and throughout the western nations... just look at plummeting church attendance with the younger generations!
- There is also a falling away from the truth of the Bible by those who have distorted and twisted Scripture, falling into serious error and many are being led astray.

1 Timothy 4:1-2 *Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.*

Jesus warned of false teachers more than any other prophetic end times sign...

Matthew 24:5, 11, 24 *For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many... Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many...*

For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

- The Last Days will bring about an increasing "falling away" (apostasy) from core Biblical Christianity throughout our world, denying the key central doctrines of our faith!

Denial of the Second Coming of Christ...

2 Peter 3:3-4 *Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?"*

For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."

Denial of the pending judgments of God...

2 Peter 3:5-7 *For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.*

Now, in this current generation, we are witnessing the post-Christian ‘Deconversion’ phenomenon!

1 John 2:19 *These people left our churches, but they never really belonged with us; otherwise they would have stayed with us. When they left, it proved that they did not belong with us.*

The Last Days will also be evidenced by the greatest move of God our world has ever witnessed!

- This would included the preaching and receiving of the Gospel worldwide!

Matthew 24:14 *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*

The foretold revival outpouring...

- Just before the Tribulation (*Luke 14:15-24)
- During the Tribulation (*Revelation 7:9, 13-14)

#5. Increase of Lawlessness...

The “*mystery of lawlessness*” was active in Paul’s day, as it is in our world today, and will this expand significantly as we approach the return of King Jesus in His Second Coming...

2 Thessalonians 2:7-8 *For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.*

This same spirit of lawlessness is thoroughly dominant in our generation, and is active in even in the church too...

- Today, many who profess Christ do not even seek to faithfully obey Him .
- And, although we can’t be saved by keeping the commandments (the Law), those who are saved strive to obey the One they claim to love.

1 John 3:6 (NIV) *No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has neither seen him or known him.*

- The faithful church of these last days stands in stark contrast with the false apostate ‘church’ by its passion to live for and honor Christ.

Titus 2:14 (speaking of Jesus) *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.*

#6. Global Technological Delusions...

The advancements of mankind will culminate in a utopian tyranny and destructive global implosion.

Transhumanism rebellion and self-deification seek to create a world without God...

Psalm 14:1 *The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good.*

Jeremiah 17:9 *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?*

- The desire of some to "be like God" (Genesis 3:5) originated with Satan's deceptive lie to Eve.

High-speed transportation and a knowledge explosion will happen before Christ return...

Daniel 12:4 *But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.*

(Note: This verse could also mean that the Book of Daniel would be understood more in the Last Days.)

AI Computer and laser technology...

Revelation 13:16-17 *He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast.*

Instantaneous Worldwide Communications...

Revelation 11:9-10 (regarding the two witnesses) *Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb.*

#7. A World Overwhelmed...

In the Last Days people will experience the constant sensation of feeling overcome by circumstances while living daily in a quandary by what is happening in our world.

Luke 21:25-26 *And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.*

Disasters, both natural and man-made, will encompass all the world during the Great Tribulation...

Matthew 24:6-8 *And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.*

- Wars and rumors of wars
 - Increasing famine
 - Overwhelming pestilence
 - Earthquakes of unprecedented destruction
- (cf. Luke 21:10-11; Mark 13:7-8)

Globalism this is preparing the way for the rise of Antichrist...

Daniel 9:27 *Then he (Antichrist) shall confirm a covenant with many for one week (seven years); But in the middle of the week (3.5 years) He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.*

- Restoration of the 'Roman Empire' into a final Beast system (cf. Daniel 2 and 7; 9:27)
- Movement toward world government (Daniel 7:23-26)

The promise of the return of Jesus Christ to end this age of evil and destruction...

Matthew 24:22 *And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.*

Daniel 7:26-27 *But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.'*

#8. God's Final Word:

The Messiah's Triumph and Kingdom

Psalms 2:1-12

Why do the nations rage, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us." He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill." I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Reflections On His Return

Philippians 1:9-11

And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Authentic believers from throughout the ages have set their hearts on the day in which they will stand for before Christ, our Savior, and this has inspired them to live their life on this earth with the eyes fixed on Jesus, with heaven in mind!

We need to be reminded that this world is not our home...

Philippians 3:20 *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body.*

- Those who “eagerly await” His return are filled with the hope that they too will be transformed as they receive their resurrection eternal body (1 Corinthians 15:51-54).

Colossians 3:4 *When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 *And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.*

The scriptures clearly reveal that when Jesus returns to this earth He will bring His faithful church with Him (see Revelation 19:14)...

- Christ will return to rescue His remnant followers in the Pre-Tribulational Rapture before from the judgements of the Tribulation (7 years) begins.

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 *For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and 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, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*

Believers should be motivated and boldly sharing their faith as they seek to bring others to faith in Jesus...

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 *For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy.*

The Rapture is our “*blessed hope*” (Titus 2:13), and a great encouragement to live each day faithful in Christ...

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

This life we are presently living is but preparation for His return for the true church, and we should seek to live holy lives as we wait for that glorious day...

2 Peter 3:11-12 *Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God.*

We are warned in the scriptures that prior to Jesus’ Rapture return for the church, church, many false teachers will declare erroneous doctrines, seeking to confuse the faithful...

2 Thessalonians 2:1-2 *Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.*

At the literal Second Coming of Jesus He will bring the ultimate actions of God’s justice to earth, and this will happen with awesome and absolute finality...

2 Thessalonians 1:6-7 (NIV) *God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels.*

- The Christian’s race on this earth necessarily includes much angst and tension.
- The promise of future eternal rest helps the suffering Christian to endure present trials.

The Antichrist is identified as “*the lawless one*” and he will arrive and dominate this world for a short time, but he will be defeated completely by Christ upon His return...

2 Thessalonians 2:8 *And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.*

- As believers, we need the constant admonition regarding what is coming when Jesus returns to end the works of darkness, and inaugurate His Millennial Kingdom.

We are called to remain faithful to our King as we patiently await His return...

1 Timothy 6:13-16 (NIV) *I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time - God the blessed and only Ruler, the King of Kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.*

As His ambassadors we draw our wisdom and strength from God's word, the Bible...

2 Timothy 4:1-2 (NIV) *In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage- with great patience and careful instruction.*

- We should only teach and proclaim the revelational truths of the scriptures!
- When Jesus returns He will bring forth great rewards for those “watchman” believers who “longed for” that day, and therefore had sought to serve Him faithfully.

Those who hold on to their “blessed hope” of Christ coming again in glory will maintain both their strength and wisdom in this world today...

Titus 2:13-14 *Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*

- The Second Coming promise is our reminder that this present evil age will soon be coming to an end, therefore we pursue doing good that honors our Lord.

Christ came the first time to purchase our redemption at the cross of Calvary, but His return brings His family the fullness of our salvation...

Hebrews 9:28 (NIV) *Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.*

We are strongly urged of the Lord to pursue the fellowship of the saints, and even more so in this generation that awaits “the Day” of His return...

Hebrews 10:24-25 *And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*

While daily maintaining our faith, we need to wait patiently for His coming...

James 5:7-8 *Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.*

Our walk with the Lord provides us a “living hope” which rest on the foundation of His Resurrection, as well as the assurance of our future with Him...

1 Peter 1:3-5 *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.*

- The hope of the believer is categorically different than what this world offers in that it is not merely a temporal reprieve of troubles, but an eternal life of peace in God's presence!
- Because our hope is firmly fixed on what is to come when Christ returns, we can live each day in pursuit of loving the Lord completely and intelligently!

The way we live in this world, being observed by others, may just be the one thing that draws them to Jesus, and the blessings He brings when He returns...

1 Peter 2:12 (NIV) *Live such good lives among the pagans that though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.*

Christians have suffered much persecution throughout the church age, but all these trials and tribulations will quickly be turned to joy when he returns...

1 Peter 4:13 (NIV) *But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.*

There are eternal rewards for those who persevere in faith...

1 Peter 5:4 (NIV) *And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.*

The Bible foretells of those who will come in the Last Days mocking the belief in the literal Second Coming of Jesus...

2 Peter 3:3 (NIV) *Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised?”*

- What is most shocking about those who deny the imminency of Christ' return (especially regarding the Pre-Tribulational Rapture) is that they come from within the 'church' community.
- Interestingly, those same people who deny the teaching of the Lord's return also reject a literal Genesis account of God's judgment in Noah's Flood (see 2 Peter 3:4-7).

We are counseled in the scriptures to proactively remain close to the Lord...

1 John 2:28 *And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.*

Also, we are promised that believers will receive a resurrected, immortal body, free from the sin nature, when Jesus Rapture's His church unto the heavenly realm...

1 John 3:2-3 *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*

- As we celebrate the Lord's Supper we both proclaim His death and Resurrection, and this we will continue till He returns!

Our most needful prayer for ourselves is to purposely seek to live in the love of God as we patiently wait for His return...

Jude 1:21 (NIV) *Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.*

We are to share with all that the Second Coming of Christ is the fulfillment of "day of the Lord" when judgement will come upon all who have rejected redemption of Jesus...

Jude 1:14-15 (NIV) *Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."*

Revelation 1:7-8 *Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen. "I am the Alpha and the Omega", says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come."*

We need to remember that as we wait for His return there will be many in this life who will not stand in faith with us...

Revelation 3:11 *Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.*

When Jesus returns He will have the final say as He alone will be our judge for how we lived our life here on this earth...

Revelation 22:12-13 *"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."*

The heart the true believer, no matter what age we live in, is ever mindful of the imminency of meeting the Lord in the Rapture or in our death...

Revelation 22:20-21 *"Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!*

A Concise Overview Of End Times Events

Luke 21:28

Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.

The Bible has a lot to say about the end times!

- Nearly every book of the Bible contains significant prophecy regarding the end times!
- Studying Biblical prophecy reveals to all the unique sovereignty of God... He is in control!
- It provides for us absolute confidence in the truth of the Bible.
- They also lead us to a blessed assurance and hope that our future is secure in Him.

Titus 2:13 *Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.*

The Church Raptured...

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*

- The Rapture is an imminent event that could happen at any time, with no signs proceeding required!
- Christ will remove all born-again believers from the earth in the Rapture.

1 Corinthians 15:51-54 *Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”*

The Rapture is intended to keep the Church from the Tribulation...

Revelation 3:10 *Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.*

After the Rapture of the true church there are two events that occur in Heaven:

1. The Judgment Seat of Christ...

Believers will be rewarded for good works and faithful service during their time on earth or will lose rewards, but not eternal life, for lack of service and obedience.

(2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15)

2. Marriage Supper of the Lamb...

Revelation 19:7, 9 *Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready...*

Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!

- This will happen after the Judgement Seat of Christ, where the Church, Bride of Christ, celebrates King Jesus' victory as the family of the Lord.

After the Rapture of the true church, here are the major events on the earth:

Gog and Magog Invasion...

- Invasion of Israel by a coalition of nations (see Ezekiel 38-39). Note, some place this event before the Tribulation period.
- Gog is described as the "chief prince" of the lands of Meshech and Tubal.
- Armies from Persia, Cush (Ethiopia), Put (Libya), Gomer, and Beth-togarmah join the alliance.
- The invaders come to plunder the wealth of a formerly scattered people who now live securely in the land of Israel.
- God intervenes directly with natural disasters, causing the invading armies to turn their swords on one another.
- The forces of Gog are destroyed by a massive earthquake, torrential rain, and fire.

The Antichrist Revealed...

The 'Restrainer' (the Holy Spirit, possibly including the Church) is removed, making possible for this man of evil to step on the world scene.

2 Thessalonians 2:7-8 *For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed... (cf. vv. 2:1-12)*

The Antichrist (aka, the Beast) will come into power and will confirm a covenant with Israel for seven years. This seven-year period of time is known as the Tribulation...

Daniel 9:27 *Then he (i.e., the Antichrist) shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.*

- During the Tribulation, there will be terrible wars, famines, plagues, and natural disasters. God's judgement against sin will be fully realized.
- The Tribulation will include the appearance of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, seven seals, trumpets, and bowl judgments.

The Ultimate Deception...

- The Antichrist is empowered by *"lying signs and wonders"* (2 Thessalonians 2:2-12).

2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 *The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*

He authorizes the Third temple to be built in Jerusalem...

Revelation 11:1 *Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said "Get up and measure the temple (or sanctuary) of God and the altar, and those who worship in it.*

- 'Two Witnesses' of the Lord boldly prophecy on earth for 3.5 years (Revelation 11:2-3).
- Halfway through the seven years, the Antichrist will break the peace covenant with Israel and make war against it, even killing the 'two witnesses'.
- The Antichrist will commit "*the abomination of desolation*" and set up an image of himself to be worshipped in the Jerusalem temple (Daniel 9:27; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10), which will have been rebuilt.
- The second half of the Tribulation is known as "*the Great Tribulation*" (Rev. 7:14), and this is "*the time of Jacob's trouble*" (Jeremiah 30:7), fulfilling Daniel's 70th week prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27).

Revelation 13:5 *There was given to him [Antichrist] a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months (3.5 years) was given to him.*

Armageddon: The Final Battle...

- At the end of the seven-year tribulation, the Antichrist will gather the armies of the earth to Israel, culminating in the battle of Armageddon.
- Jesus Christ will return, destroy the Antichrist and his armies, bringing about a swift judgement, exiling them from the earth (Revelation 19:11-21).

Revelation 19:11 *Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.*

Revelation 1:7 *Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.*

Christ will then bind Satan and send him to the Abyss, and He will then rule from Jerusalem His earthly kingdom for a thousand-year period...

Revelation 20:1-6 *And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time. I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given*

authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

At the end of Christ's Millennial Kingdom...

- Satan will be released, and create a rebellion against the Lord, but he will be defeated for the final time. He will then be cast into the lake of fire for eternity.

Revelation 20:7-10 *Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire...*

Christ then judges all unbelievers from throughout the ages at the Great White Throne Judgment...

Revelation 20:10-15 *Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*

After this event He will then usher in a New Heaven and New Earth, with the New Jerusalem, the eternal dwelling place of believers, being revealed from Heaven...

- There will then be no more sin or death as revealed in Revelation 21–22, and the redemption of mankind will finally be completed.

Revelation 21:3-4 *And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."*

What The Bible Reveals About The Rapture and Second Coming

Daniel 12:4

But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.

A word for the church today to be wise for such a time as this!

Daniel 12:8-10

Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, "My lord, what shall be the end of these things?" And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand."

- The Rapture and the Second Coming of Christ are often confused, and sometimes it is difficult to determine whether a scripture verse/passage is referring to the Rapture or the Second Coming.
- As we study Bible prophecy, it is very important to differentiate between these two important events.

The Rapture is when Jesus Christ returns to remove the church (all believers in Christ) from the earth...

- The Rapture is most thoroughly described by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 as believers who have died will have their bodies resurrected and, along with the believers who are still living, will meet the Lord in the air.
- According to the Bible, this will all occur in a moment, in a "*twinkling of an eye*" (1 Corinthians 15:50-54).

The Second Coming is when Jesus returns to defeat the Antichrist, destroy evil, and establish His Millennial Kingdom...

The Second Coming is revealed in prophecy in Revelation 19:11-16.

The Important Contrasts Between The Rapture and Second Coming:

At the Rapture believers meet the Lord in the air...

1 Thessalonians 4:17 *Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*

- He comes for His own to bring them home.

John 14:2-3 *I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.*

At the Second Coming believers return with the Lord from their heavenly home...

Revelation 19:14 *And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. (cf. Revelation 17:14)*

The Rapture occurs before the Great Tribulation...

Revelation 3:10 *Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.*

The Second Coming occurs after the wrath of divine judgements of the Great Tribulation...

Matthew 24:29-30 *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. 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.*
(see Revelation chapters 6–19)

The Rapture is the removal of believers from the earth as an act of deliverance...

1 Thessalonians 1:10 *Wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*

1 Thessalonians 5:9 *For God did not appoint us to wrath (the Tribulation judgements) but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The Second Coming involves the removal of unbelievers from the earth in God's divine judgment...

Matthew 25:31-32 *When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.*

The Rapture will be secret and instant...

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 *Behold, I tell you a mystery (gr. mystērion; that which was previously hidden/secret, but now revealed): We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

The Second Coming will be visible to all...

Revelation 1:7 *Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.*

The Rapture is imminent; it could take place at any moment...

Titus 2:11-13 *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.*

(cf. 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:50-54)

The Second Coming will not occur until after a multitude of end-times events take place...

Luke 21:8-11 *“Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am He,’ and, ‘The time has drawn near.’ Therefore do not go after them. But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately.” Then He said to them, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.*

(see Matthew 24:15-30; Luke 21:7-36; Revelation chapters 6–18)

The purpose of the Tribulation is the fulfilling the Lord’s promises to Israel...

- According to Daniel’s 70th Week Prophecy (see Daniel 9:24-27) the Tribulation focus is Israel.
- The Tribulation is specifically called the “*time of Jacob’s (Israel’s) trouble*” (Jeremiah 30:7).
- In context, Matthew 24 addresses the Tribulation, with Israel being the primary subject that Jesus was speaking about, not the church (see pertinent references in Matthew 24:15-16; 20).
- The Matthew 24 text does not address the Rapture, but does relate directly to the events regarding Second Coming (see Matthew 24:32-51).

Some Additional Considerations Regarding The Truth of the Pre-Tribulational Rapture

The primary evangelistic mission during the Tribulation will be carried out by the Jews (not the Church)...

- The 144,000 Jewish men (Revelation 7:3-8; 14:1-5)
- Along with the “*two witnesses*” (Revelation 11:1-14) and the angel who proclaims “*the everlasting gospel throughout the earth*” (Revelation 14:6-7).

There is no mention of the church here on the earth during the Great Tribulation!

- The church is referenced 20 times in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, and is missing as the events of the Tribulation are described in various details (Revelation 6-19).
- During this same time period the saints of the church age are clearly seen in heaven.

- Many of those who come to faith after the Rapture will be martyred during the Tribulation. and they are seen coming into heaven, joining those Raptured previously (Revelation 7:9-10, 14-15).

If the Rapture and the Second Coming are conjoined together the logical question of who repopulates the earth for the Millennial Kingdom is irreconcilable...

- According to the Bible, all believers receive their Resurrection bodies at the Rapture (1 Corinthians 15:51-53).
- At the end of the Tribulation, all unbelievers will go into judgement and not enter the Millennial Kingdom where Christ reigns as King (cf. Matthew 25:31-46, Sheep-Goat Judgment).
- Therefore, if believers no longer reproduce children (in their resurrected bodies), and all unbelievers are cast away from earth in judgement, there would be no one to repopulate planet earth throughout the Millennium Kingdom of Christ (if the Rapture is the same event as the Second Coming).

If the Rapture and Second Coming are Post-Tribulation events:

- When do we, the church-age believers, appear before the Judgement Seat of Christ and celebrate the Marriage Supper of the Lamb?
- The Pre-Tribulation Rapture proposes that these events occur in heaven during the time of the Tribulation here on the earth since both of these events involve church age believers only.
- The Post-Tribulation view does not allow time for these very significant events if the Rapture would happen at the end of the Tribulation.

Summary:

- The Rapture is the return of Christ in the clouds to remove all believers from the earth before the time of God's Tribulation wrath.
- The Second Coming is the return of Christ to the earth to bring the Tribulation to an end, defeating the Antichrist and his evil world empire.

The Rapture and Second Coming are similar but separate events.

Both involve Jesus returning.

Both are end-times events.

However, it is crucially important to recognize the many Biblical differences.

What The Bible Says About The 'Church' In The Last Days

Matthew 16:18

On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

The Bible foretells of a true fellowship of believers in the last days in which Jesus is honored and glorified...

2 Chronicles 7:14 *If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn (repent) from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*

The true church of the last days will be characterized by...

- A humble (not haughty) spirit
- Fervent prayer (not prayerlessness)
- Daily repentance with regard to one's own sin
- A passionate desire to intimately know Jesus, and to make Him known in this generation!

Matthew 5:6-8 *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

The Bible also foretells the rise of a false, apostate church worldwide just before the return of Jesus...

- A great 'falling away' (apostasy) from authentic Biblical Christianity is repeatedly foretold in the end times.

Matthew 24:4-5, 11, 24-25 *Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many... Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many... For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.*

1 Timothy 4:1 *Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.*

2 Peter 2:1 *But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies*

Jude 1:17-18 *But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts.*

Signs Of The 'Last Days' False Church:

Lack of love for one another but full of 'self-love' and merely outwardly religious...

2 Timothy 3:1-5 (NIV) *But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves... lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!*

A multitude of popular and well accepted false teachers will dominate the church landscape in the Last Days...

2 Timothy 4:2-4 *Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.*

- Jesus warned that many false teachers would come in His name in the last days!

2 Timothy 3:13 *But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.*

1 John 4:1 *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

Deception and wickedness from within the church (i.e. “tares among the wheat”)...

Matthew 13:24-30 *Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat... Let both grow together until the harvest.*

Lukewarm and self-satisfied...

Revelation 3:15-17 (NIV) *I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.*

This 'last days' false church would believe itself to be doing God's will but, according to Jesus, many are heading towards eternal judgment...

Matthew 7:21-23 *Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'*

- Note that many ‘christian’ influencers in our world today make a multitude of unsubstantiated miraculous, supernatural claims.
- Jesus was adamantly clear that at the final Great White Throne Judgement before the Lord all such self-deception will be exposed (see Revelation 20:11-15).

Jesus said that many who claim to be following Him in today's false church would actually "*hear*" but not "*understand*" or obey His word...

Matthew 13:18-21 *Therefore hear the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.*

Jesus declared that His true church would not only "*hear the word*" but would "*understand*" and obey His word, bearing much fruit...

Matthew 13:23 *But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces (a life of faithfulness).*

- This would be His true church that He foretold of! (see the parable of the Seed and the Sower in Matthew 13:18-23, Mark 4:13-20; Luke 8:11-15)

John 15:5-8 *"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.*

- Those who are the authentic disciples of Jesus will be known by their faithfulness to Him, and their good works/deeds, along with their service in His name among others!

Israel: The Greatest Sign of Prophecy Being Fulfilled Today

Genesis 12:3

I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

On May 14, 1948 the United Nations recognized the state of Israel after a world-wide dispersion of almost 1900 years...

- Israel has been preserved through immeasurable persecution throughout these many centuries while being dispersed among the nations.
- Through several wars aimed at her destruction since their regathering (which was foretold in the scriptures).

The most frequent last days Bible promise concerns Israel's physical re-gathering and eventual spiritual restoration...

- For this to happen in 1948 was an incredible fulfillment of Biblical prophecy!

Deuteronomy 4:27-31 *And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will drive you. And there you will serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice (for the LORD your God is a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.*

Hosea 14:4-7 *I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely, for My anger has turned away from him. I will be like the dew to Israel; He shall grow like the lily, and lengthen his roots like Lebanon. His branches shall spread; His beauty shall be like an olive tree, and his fragrance like Lebanon. Those who dwell under his shadow shall return; They shall be revived like grain, And grow like a vine. Their scent shall be like the wine of Lebanon.*

Romans 11:25-29 *For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins." Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.*

Israel will be the epicenter of world politics in the Last Days as there will be a mass return of Jews to the land of Israel...

- Israel will be invaded by great and powerful armies from Russia, Iran, and Turkey, but they will be victorious over them through the supernatural intervention of the Lord (see Ezekiel 38-39).
- Antichrist will then make a 7-year covenant of "peace" with Israel. (see Daniel 9:24-27)

The temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem...

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 *Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*

Revelation 11:1 *Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, "Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there."*

How should the Christian church today understand Israel, especially in the context of its modern day reestablishment?

God has not forgotten Israel, neither should the church...

Isaiah 44:21 (NIV) *Remember these things, Jacob, for you, Israel, are my servant. I have made you, you are my servant; Israel, I will not forget you.*

We have all benefited from their struggle...

Romans 11:11 *I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.*

We, all Bible believing Christians, are dependent upon the past, present and future of Israel...

Romans 11:18 *do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.*
(cf. Abrahamic Covenant, Genesis 12:3).

God has declared His unending love for Israel (so we should too)...

Jeremiah 31:1, 3 *I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people... I have loved you with an everlasting love.*

God calls us to show mercy to Israel...

Romans 11:30-31 *For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy.*

The Bible foretells a mass return and restoration of the Jews to the land of Israel...

Deuteronomy 30:2-5 (NIV) *When you and your children return to the LORD your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you. Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the LORD your God will gather you and bring you back. He will bring you to the land that belonged to your ancestors, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your ancestors.*

Ezekiel 34:13, 24 (NIV) *I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. (cf. Ezekiel 37:1-14)*

The promise of God to the people and nation of Israel is that when the Jews return to the land from their long exile they will never to be removed again...

Amos 9:14-15 *I will bring my people Israel back from exile. "They will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them," says the LORD your God.*

The Bible warns us of a time of unprecedented deception in the days just before Jesus return (The Great Tribulation)...

Matthew 24:4-5, 11, 24-25 (NIV) *Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many... many false prophets will appear and deceive many people... For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you ahead of time.*

Antichrist will make/confirm a 7-year covenant of "peace" with Israel...

Daniel 9:27 (NIV) *He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.*

Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel after 3.5 years, and worldwide persecution of Jewish people will result...

Matthew 24:15-16 (NIV) *So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel —let the reader understand— then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. (cf. Daniel 12:1-4)*

Jeremiah 30:7-8 *Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it. 'For it shall come to pass in that day,' says the LORD of hosts, 'that I will break his yoke from your neck, and will burst your bonds; Foreigners shall no more enslave them.*

At the end of the Tribulation believing Israel will finally recognize and receive Jesus as their longed for Messiah...

Zechariah 12:10 *And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.*

When Jesus literally returns...

In the Millennial Kingdom Israel is promised to be the prime position amongst the nations according to the Bible when Jesus returns. (

Isaiah 60:1-3, 12-14 (NIV) *Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn... For the nation or kingdom that will not serve you will perish; it will be utterly ruined. The glory of Lebanon will come to you, the juniper, the fir and the cypress together, to adorn my sanctuary; and I will glorify the place for my feet. The children of your oppressors will come bowing before you; all who despise you will bow down at your feet and will call you the City of the LORD, Zion of the Holy One of Israel. (cf. Isaiah 62:1-2, Jeremiah 31:7ff)*

Summary of Bible Prophecy Regarding Israel

- Israel will be regathered, regenerated, and restored.
(Jeremiah 33:8; Ezekiel 11:17; 37:1-14; Romans 11:26; Isaiah 11:10-12).
- They will again have sovereignty over the promised land and of Jerusalem.
(Luke 21:24)

The prophetic testimony of divine intervention is the land and people of Israel...

Ezekiel 39:7-8 (NIV) *I will make known my holy name among my people Israel. I will no longer let my holy name be profaned, and the nations will know that I the LORD am the Holy One in Israel. It is coming! It will surely take place, declares the Sovereign LORD. This is the day I have spoken of.*

We, the faithful church, are exhorted to pray for Israel's peace and salvation...

Psalms 122:6 *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: May they prosper who love you.*

Romans 10:1 *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.*

What The Bible Says About “Gold” and Wealth In the Last Days

1 Timothy 6:10

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

The Bible refers to gold and wealth in several last days’ prophecies, and from these Scriptures we can learn some very important facts of life:

Gold will increase in value and be stored up by many in the last days, and be a witness against those who trusted in riches rather than God...

James 5:1-3 *Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you! Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days.*

Men will be “lovers of money” rather than lovers of God increasingly in the end times...

Yet they would have an appearance of godliness (a religious veneer)!

2 Timothy 3:1-5 *But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money... having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!*

The wealthy of the world will not only store up gold as a hedge against all the global turmoil, but many will even worship idols of gold...

Revelation 9:20 *But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk.*

Their confidence will be in gold and materialism rather than their Creator...

Revelation 18:11-12, 16-17 *And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls... Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.*

The Antichrist will honor a false god with “gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things” and he shall have control over much of the world’s gold, silver and wealth...

Daniel 11:38 *But in their place he (Antichrist) shall honor a god of fortresses; and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things...*

Daniel 11:43 *But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps”*

The last days apostate church will be decked with gold and wealth (see Revelation 3:14-22)...

Revelation 17:4 *The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.*

- Note: It has been reported that the Vatican in Rome has huge reserves of gold and silver treasure.

Zephaniah 1:18 *Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord’s wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy, for He will make speedy riddance of all those who dwell in the land.*

There are significant prophecies to be fulfilled regarding gold and wealth in the Last Days...

- It has been foretold that Russia, Iran, Turkey, and their Muslim confederacy will attack Israel in the last days (see Ezekiel 38-39), and they are invading in part to take over Israel’s gold, silver, and other spoil.

Ezekiel 38:3-4, 13 *Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, “Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army... Have you come to take plunder? Have you gathered your army to take booty, to carry away silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods, to take great plunder.*

Israel is already well advanced in wealth when compared with their Islamic neighbors...

- Israel’s massive oil and gas discoveries, along with the huge mineral deposits in the Dead Sea will act as the “hook” that brings these nations to battle in Israel.

Witnessing and investing in what really matters most in life is wise...

- The Bible indicates that the world, and even the visible church, will be heaping up riches – in particular gold – in the last days.
- The demand and value of gold will likely be on the rise as we see the Rapture approaching.
- Not surprisingly, this is exactly what is happening in our world today.

These are some of the many last days prophetic trends which prove the Bible alone is the inspired Word of God...

- Many are now talking about and investing in gold, and believers can use this topic as a springboard to share the Gospel.
- We can use this prophetic trend to validate the Bible, and then share regarding what really matters most, trusting in Jesus to save us!

Concerning stewardship...

Matthew 6:19-21 *Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

- Those who do lay up treasure for themselves on earth are foolish and worldly-minded according to what Jesus taught us.

Luke 12:15 Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses. (See Luke 12:15-21).

- Everything outside of Christ will soon be dissolved, as they never even existed.

2 Peter 3:11-13 *What manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

We are called to be faithful stewards of whatever the Lord has entrusted to us this side of eternity (see Luke 19:12-26)...

- We should invest our time, talent, and treasure in the Lord's work!
- A faithful steward will put the Lord, and obedience to His Word first and foremost in all their decisions, and what they truly value the most.

Concerning the Last Day's church, Jesus has this to say...

Revelation 3:16-17 *So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.*

- No amount of worldly wealth will save anyone from God's coming judgments.
- Jesus counsels all to repent and place their faith in Him rather than temporary riches of this age.
- The genuineness of your faith is more precious than gold (see 1 Peter 1:6-7).

We are all called to be wise stewards of the financial means God has entrusted to us...

Luke 16:10-11 *He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, how will you commit to your trust the true riches?*

Our first responsibility is to owe no one anything except to love...

Romans 13:8 *Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.*

- If you're in debt, first work off the debt before making financial investments.
- If you are free of debt and giving generously to the work of the Lord, then continue to pray and seek the Lord's counsel.

2 Corinthians 9:7-8 *So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.*

Having a personal savings, when possible, is biblically mature and responsible...

Proverbs 13:22 *A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, but the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous.*

2 Corinthians 12:14 *After all, children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children.*

All the Lord has given you as a blessing should be at His disposal...

Luke 12:48 *From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.*

1 Timothy 6:17 (NIV) *Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.*

Because time is so short and prophecy regarding these days are lining up, it is no surprise to see gold rising on the world market...

- Therefore, gold may seem to be a good short-term investment, but remember ultimately it is our soul that God is concerned with!

Only God can show you if you should invest in the short-term in gold or the world's goods in general...

- The Lord has promised us that if we "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" He will guide us and provide for every need (Matthew 6:33).

Our primary commission as followers of Christ is to reach out to those lost souls in our midst, seeking to bring them the hope of salvation...

- Therefore, we should definitely use Bible prophecy to confirm God's Word and then share the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ with all.

A Thoughtful Expose Of The Days In Which We Are Living

Matthew 24:7-8

*For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.
And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.
All these are the beginning of sorrows.*

For years, some Christians have held out hope that America would experience another wave of spiritual regeneration, but the overwhelming reality before us is self evident...

- Anarchists and agitators, woke culture-drivers and even some politicians and religionists, are openly advocating for socialism, racial division, and the wholesale rejection of Judeo-Christian values.

We are strongly urged from the scriptures to know the times in which we live and respond Biblically in faith...

1 Chronicles 12:32 *The sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do.*

The Bible describes with absolute clarity the moral decay of these days as we await our rescue from heaven...

Luke 21:36 *Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.*

2 Timothy 3:1-5 *But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.*

The danger foretold in the scripture is that much of mankind would abandon belief in the one true God in the last days, and turn inward, making themselves the final say regarding reality...

- This implosion of consciousness would lead to a radical loss of meaning and purpose, and produce a sense of mass hopelessness.
- Into this void of the abandonment of God our world will be primed to fall into the plans of the evil one and his Antichrist, leading to an almost complete destruction of life.

Matthew 24:22 *And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.*

We should note that Bible prophecy does not reveal that America will experience national revival in the days preceding His return...

- Much of the modern 'church' today has long abandoned a zeal for the true gospel of Jesus Christ. In this age of relativism, the truth is Biblical evangelism is considered passé.
- Many in today's church hear only a social gospel, see performance based worship, and are kept busy with a multiplicity programs that keep the congregation distracted.

Our mission as Christ's disciples, as with all generations before us, remains...

Matthew 28:19 *Go therefore and make disciples.*

What was foretold is now being fulfilled before our eyes, and this is evident throughout our world today...

- This reality could be disheartening for the multitudes who are simply unaware.
- But it is exactly what the Bible told us will happen prior to the return of Jesus!

The Bible foretells of the steady decline of our world that rejects the Lord...

- God gives people over to increasing debauchery and inevitable self destruction.

Romans 1:18 *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.*

Romans 1:24-25 (NIV) *Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. (cf. Romans 1:26-32).*

Scripture distinctly foretold of the increasing apostasy in the latter times as many would fall away from the faith...

1 Timothy 4:1 *Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.*

Bible prophecy is designed by God to prepare us for these tumultuous days in which we are living in, not scare us...

Luke 21:31-32 *So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place.*

It can be disheartening to witness our society's downward revolutionary trends...

- In just the last 20 years, we've seen a dramatic rise in lawlessness and increased polarization — politically, racially, ethnically, economically and socially. In recent times, chaos has engulfed many American cities.

- Despite the increasing escalation of evil throughout our world today, God is still the “restrainer” of evil (2 Thessalonians 2:7), and He has promised to be with His faithful church always.

Hebrews 13:5 *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”*

A worldwide ‘falling away’ (i.e., apostasy) is a clear and present reality...

- In America we have overtly rejected our historic roots in favor of various progressive ideologies which overtly deny Judeo-Christian morality.
- Since the mid-1960’s, modernists have cast off the ‘fetters’ of restraint which has resulted in rampant adultery, fornication, along with an explosion of pornography and divorce, as well as an embrace of every sexual abomination under the sun.
- During this same time we have seen the rise of the satanic religion of Humanism, with its idolization of individual autonomy.

Galatians 6:7 *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.*

So what hope remains if revival is unrealistic and the godless revolution of this generation is being fully embraced...

- Reliance on God's Word is foundational for the individual believer!
- This is the same Word of God that reveals these inevitable end-time realities.

Our sufficiency and strength is realized as we faithfully live in His love...

1 John 4:18 *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear.*

Like King David of old we too, as believers in Christ, can boldly proclaim...

Psalms 56:11 *In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?*

The Bible offers us many examples of people who determined to put their trust in God — even in the midst of seeming catastrophe...

- Jeremiah gave faithful testimony of God’s unrelenting hope in spite of Israel’s national disaster.

Lamentations 3:22 *Through the LORD’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. (cf. Lamentations 3:19-24).*

- Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego proclaimed their reliance on God in the face of a fiery furnace.

Daniel 3:16-17 *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king.*

Habakkuk found peace with a prayer requesting mercy in the midst of wrath...

Habakkuk 3:2 *LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, LORD. Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy.*

- Christians can demonstrate that kind of tough faith because we have the revelation of God. He has told us what to expect as the Day of the Lord draws near.
- Our “Good Shepherd” is always with us, even in *“the valley of the shadow of death”* (Psalm 23:4)

John 10:11 *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.”*

Luke 21:28 *Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.*

Here are some Biblical ways Christians can overcome the ever growing spiritual apostasy witnessed throughout our world, and even in much of today's modern church:

1. Study the Word of God (hide it in your heart, glean its promises, become “well-versed” in its truth)...

- God has promised to reveal Himself, and His overarching plan for mankind, through the revelation of the Bible.

2 Timothy 2:15 *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

Psalms 119:11 *I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*

2. Pray fervently (without ceasing)...

James 5:16 *The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.*

1 John 5:14 *And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.*

3. Personally determine not to quench or grieve the Holy Spirit...

Galatians 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.*

Ephesians 4:30 *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

4. Keep your eyes on Jesus (and not the world), not only to receive His blessing but to live the life you were created for...

Hebrews 12:1-2 *And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.*

Hebrews 9:28 *So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.*

5. Study the “signs of the times” given in the scriptures, and seek to be a faithful “watchman” for the Lord (see Ezekiel 3:17-21; 33:1-11)...

Revelation 19:10 *Hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*

Daniel 12:9-10 *And he said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.*

God promises a special blessing for all those who study Bible prophecy, and seek to live in obedience to its admonitions...

Revelation 1:3 *Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.*

The Remnant Church Of The End Times

Matthew 5:6

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Those who truly know the Lord are always Rapture ready...

They live with expectancy, and a daily desire to know and obey the Lord, while seeking to honor Him in their life journey.

Remnant believers passionately share the 'good news' of Jesus with others...

2 Corinthians 5:20 (NIV) *We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.*

They carefully study their Bible and seek to obey what it says...

2 Timothy 2:15 *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

2 Timothy 3:16-17 *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

They are people of sincere prayer, seeking daily to be guided by the wisdom of the Lord...

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 *Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

They faithfully live in fellowship with others, not forsaking their church family...

Hebrews 10:24-25 *And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*

They have a heart seek to serve the Lord among those in this world as a testimony to Him who alone is worthy...

Joshua 24:15 *Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*

1 Peter 4:10-11 (NIV) *Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.*

They examine themselves as to whether they are living as authentic believers who are faithfully following Jesus...

2 Corinthians 13:5 *Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?— unless indeed you fail to meet the test!*

The primary evidence of the authentic NT church (as well as today's remnant church) is revealed through the “one another” admonitions...

- This is still the Lord's 'blueprint' fellowship for His church today!
- The Bible speaks of all true believers being 'brothers and sisters' who love one another, and living and serving together in Jesus name.
- Our heartfelt prayer is that we, as His 'Rapture Ready' church, live this truth out in such a way that the world about us takes notice, and would be drawn to our Savior!

The essential visible sign of the genuine church of Christ is love for one another...

John 13:34-35 *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*

- This love is evidenced as we encourage one another, all the more as the Day of the Rapture draws near.

Each individual believer is designed for ministry and this is accomplished as we proactively apply these 'one another' admonitions to our daily life...

- Authentic ministry is primarily relationship-driven.
- The faithful New Testament church is not about committees, activities, music, etc.
- A 'Rapture ready' church is a fellowship that serves the needs one another and not just focused on self.

The genuine fellowship of the remnant saints in these last days is witnessed by:

1. Serving one another...

Galatians 5:13 (NIV) *You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.*

2. Being devoted to one another...

Romans 12:10-13 (NIV) *Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.*

3. Being accountable to one another...

Ephesians 5:21 (NIV) *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

4. Being willing to share each others burdens...

Galatians 6:2 (NIV) *Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*

5. Be patient and forgiving with one another...

Ephesians 4:2 (NIV) *Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*

Colossians 3:13 (NIV) *Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*

6. Be truly interested in one another...

Philippians 2:3-4 (NIV) *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*

7. Confess your sin and pray for one another...

James 5:16 (NIV) *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.*

8. Live in harmony with one another...

Romans 12:16 (NIV) *Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.*

9. Do not pass judgment on one another:..

Romans 14:13; 15:7 (NIV) *Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister... Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.*

One visible sign of the last days church is that it reflects the truth of Jesus Christ through the reality of His love...

- Unfortunately, brotherly love among 'believers' has been subtly replaced by a multitude of church events, meetings, entertaining worship, and a myriad of programs designed to keep all so busy.
- It's time to come back to the simplicity of faith, being the church as it was meant to be!

2 Corinthians 11:3 *But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

In The Last Days They Will Come

A crash course on Biblical discernment for our generation

Matthew 24:11

Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

The Bible foretold of those who would arise in these last days, savage wolves and evil charlatans, who would come from within the true church. We have been forewarned, but so few are listening or discerning, which is heartbreaking, but the truth.

What did Jesus teach His church regarding spiritual deception, especially in the last days?

Matthew 7:15 *Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.*

Mark 13:22–23 *For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand.*

How can we identify a false prophet, according to the scriptures?

Deuteronomy 18:21–22 *And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?'—when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.*

Jeremiah 14:13–14 *Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Behold, the prophets say to them, 'You shall not see the sword, nor shall you have famine, but I will give you assured peace in this place.'" And the Lord said to me, "The prophets prophesy lies in My name. I have not sent them, commanded them, nor spoken to them; they prophesy to you a false vision, divination, a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart.*

What should true believers do when false prophets proclaim their own vision, which is contrary to true revelation of the Bible...

Jeremiah 23:16 *Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you worthless; They speak a vision of their own heart, Not from the mouth of the Lord.*

We should be wise, like the Berean's, examining the teaching of anyone who claims to be speaking for the Lord...

Acts 17:11 *These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.*

Remember the ultimate false ‘apostle’ is Satan himself!

2 Corinthians 11:13–15 *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.*

We need to be ever discerning regarding the crafty, but false teachings of men...

Colossians 2:8–10 *Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.*

We have been forewarned of the Lord that false teachers would bring forth wicked deception in the last days generation...

1 Timothy 4:1–3 *Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron.*

2 Timothy 3:13 *But evil men and impostors (i.e., false teachers) will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.*

False teachers are identified by their ruinous heresies that many fall prey to, as well as their deceitful greed...

2 Peter 2:1–3 *But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.*

Acts 16:17-18 *Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.*

We are commanded to not believe in naïvety, but to test the teachings of those who claim to be prophets...

1 John 4:1–3 *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.*

As the Bible foretold, many would come in the last days proclaiming “another Jesus” other than our historical Savior and Lord...

2 Corinthians 11:3-4 *But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!*

Galatians 1:6-9 *I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.*

(cf. Matthew 24:4-5, 24)

The Last Days remnant church of Jesus Christ will not put up with false, deceiving teachers as their shepherd...

Revelation 2:2–3 *I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary.*

Acts 20:29-31 *For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.*

Why Bible Prophecy Is Ignored

2 Peter 3:3-4

Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires.

They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."

Multitudes (including the many of today's pastors and church leaders) disregard prophecy because they have a lack of belief in the power of God's Word...

- Sadly, many in the 'church' today don't really believe the whole Bible is the inspired, infallible, authoritative Word of God.
- The Lord Jesus repeatedly had to denounce the religious leader (i.e., Pharisees) of His day because they were misinterpreting Scripture.

Matthew 22:29 (NIV) *Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God."*

Matthew 23:1-3 *Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach."*

Much of today's 'church' is the same way and they are not carefully studying the whole counsel of the Bible...

Acts 20:20-21, 27 (NIV) *You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus...*

For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.

Many in today's church avoid 'end times' eschatology because they have a lack of knowledge of (or training in) Bible prophecy...

- There are many who do believe that the Bible is the Word of God, but for a variety of reasons they have never taken the time to study prophecy carefully on their own, including many pastors.
- Thus, they understandably feel unprepared and inadequate to help people unpack the truths of these prophetic scriptures.

Some prophecies are, of course, complicated and require serious systematic, in depth study in order to fully comprehend...

- For example, the names mentioned in prophecies like “Gog” and “Magog” and “Gomer” and “Put” (in Ezekiel 38-39) are strange and obscure, requiring the effort of studying with an open mind.
- It takes some historical detective work to determine what these names and titles mean in their Biblical context.
- Often pastors/leaders decide they neither have the interest, nor the time, to do the research and teach others clearly and accurately, so they avoid teaching prophecy all together.

Revelation 1:3 *Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.*

The Bible strongly urges us to take Biblical prophecy seriously, and warns us of the myriad of false teachers and apostles who would come in the last days...

1 John 4:1 *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

2 Timothy 4:3-4 *For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.*

Many avoid prophecy in our generation because they have a fear of being lumped in with those who peddle sensationalism...

Admittedly, there are many false teachers who try to teach prophecy, for example:

- Harold Camping’s prediction of the Rapture on May 21, 2011
- Edgar Whisenant “88 Reasons Why Jesus Is Coming In 1988”

We are right to avoid today’s false teachers and to stay away from creating an appearance of cheapening the Word of God in these ways...

- But, just because some teach Bible prophecy wrongly, or badly, is no reason for those solid teachers of the scripture to avoid the topic.
- To the contrary, we should be teaching reliably on prophecy all the more because of those who falsely proclaim what the Bible does not.
- We shouldn’t concede the battle for the hearts, minds, and souls of people to false teachers who are deceiving and leading so many astray.

2 Timothy 4:2-3 *Preach the word: be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.*

Many don’t teach prophecy because they lack a Biblical understanding of the times in which we live and how close Christ’ return actually is...

Hebrews 9:28 *So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.*

- Sadly, many Christians who are sincere, are also asleep to the times in which we live.
- They do not perceive the remarkable moment of history that we are in, and the urgent need to prepare for the Rapture of the true church.

Jesus gives our generation strong admonition to be alert to the signs of our times (unlike like the religious leaders of His day)...

Luke 21:36 *Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.*

Matthew 16:1-4 (NIV) *The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven. He replied, "When evening comes, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,' and in the morning, 'Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah." Jesus then left them and went away.*

- We need to be people who study and recognize our times in light of Bible prophecy, like the sons of Issachar, *"men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do."* (I Chronicles 12:32).
- Today, believer's should be equipped, ready, and willing to be able to rediscover the purpose and power of Bible prophecy!

Believers in the last days are commanded by Jesus to "watch" and to "be alert" regarding the signs of His return...

Matthew 24:42-44 *Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

How can we help others come to be encouraged through the revealed blessings of prophecy discovered in the scriptures...

- Firstly, the best way is not to berate or belittle others who aren't listening to the many Biblical prophecies being fulfilled before our eyes.
- The Biblical model is to do what Jesus did, urging others to *"Come, follow me."* (Mark 10:21), and as people hear Him they will be awoken to His prophetic word.
- We can share helpful resources available that many have found to be both sound and faith-building regarding the end times (see PerspectiveInProphecy.com).

1 Thessalonians 4:17-18 *Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

How Should We Live As We Await The Second Coming Of Christ

Acts 1:11

*“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 most significant promise of the New Testament is that Jesus will return, and this will be bodily, visibly, from heaven, and with the clouds of glory...

Luke 21:27-28 *Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.*

Matthew 24:30 *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.*

Matthew 26:64 *Jesus said to him, “It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven. (cf. Mark 13:26; 14:62).*

The reference to the “clouds” and this supernatural figure is the One who comes in glory as revealed in the prophecy...

Daniel 7:13-14 *I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.*

Jesus referenced this passage to Himself before the high priest, claiming deity, thus bringing the charge of blasphemy...

Matthew 26:63-65 (NIV) *And the high priest answered and said to Him, “I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!” Jesus said to him, “It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.” Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, “He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy!*

- Jesus viewed this text from Daniel in terms of His own mission of apocalyptic deliverance at the end of this age!

The “refreshing” the Lord brings refers to personal revival...

Acts 3:19-21 *Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you - even Jesus. He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.*

- The restoration that comes with Christ' return (and believers with Him) is the noted Millennial Kingdom inaugurated.

This “day” is coming, and Jesus is the one “appointed” to enact this judgment and His Resurrection confirms this...

Acts 17:31 *For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.*

Our spiritual giftedness in the world today is corresponding linked to our “eagerly waiting” for the return of our Lord...

1 Corinthians 1:7 *Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.*

When Jesus returns, all that may have been “hidden” will be exposed for what it really is...

1 Corinthians 4:5 *Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.*

- It is a very sobering reminder for us to know that the Lord sees all, even the motives of our heart.

We Can Rest On The Prophetic Promises Of God

Luke 21:25-27

*And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars;
and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring;
men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things
which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.
Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.*

The foretold events of Christ' return, and the establishment of His kingdom, will occur the same way Jesus ascended: physically and visibly for all the world to see.

The Second Coming of Christ is a global event that ends the Great Tribulation (7 years), culminating this present age, just prior to the Millennial Kingdom...

Matthew 24:27 *For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.*

When Jesus returns to rule and reign He promises it will be in all power and with the fulness of His glory...

Mark 14:61-62 *Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."*

Matthew 25:31-32 *"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.*

Matthew 16:27 *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.*

Jesus assures believers to first bring all those "in Christ" (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) to their heavenly home (before the Tribulation)...

John 14:1-3 *Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions (literally, dwellings); if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.*

When Jesus returns to Rapture His church He will then reward us for our faithfulness during our lifetime here on this earth...

1 Corinthians 4:5 *Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.*

2 Corinthians 5:10 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

According to Jesus, His remnant church should always be prayerfully expectant, knowing that His return is imminent...

Matthew 24:44 *So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.*

Luke 21:36 *Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.*

When Jesus returns in overwhelming glory (at the end of the Tribulation) those who lived in rebellion to Him, including the Antichrist himself, will suddenly realize who He truly is...

Matthew 24:30 *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.*

In the midst of the trials and temptations of this life, believers today continue to wait in anticipation for the day when Jesus rescues them from the Tribulation judgment that will come upon this whole world (cf. Revelation 3:10)...

Luke 21:34-36 (NIV) *Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.*

We are eternally secure through faith in Christ, and joyfully wait for our Rapture resurrection...

John 6:39-40 (NIV) *And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.*

When Jesus returns for His church the truth of who we really are will be exposed to all, and then His rewards for faithfulness will be revealed

1 Corinthians 4:5 (NIV) *Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.*

The restoration of all creation awaits the day of Jesus return in His Second Coming to earth...

Acts 3:19-21 (NIV) *Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you - even Jesus. He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.*

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ speaks of His qualification and authority to be our judge when He returns as King of Kings...

Acts 17:31 *He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."*

A core indicator of being a spirit-led believer is a personal and eager anticipation regarding the Second Coming of Christ...

1 Corinthians 1:6-8 *Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Our celebration of the Lord's Supper, was designed to remind us of what Jesus accomplished for us on the cross, as well as that He is coming back again...

1 Corinthians 11:26 *For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.*

The true church of Jesus Christ is missional, discerning our purpose in the world along with the anticipation of His Second Coming...

Philippians 1:10 (NIV) *So that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ - to the glory and praise of God.*

Throughout the scriptures we have the blessed reminder of our eternal destiny, the return of our "great God and Savior, Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13), along with the transformation of our earthly bodies unto immortality (cf. 1 Cor. 15:51-54)...

Philippians 3:20 *But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.*

When Christ returns we have the promise that we too come back with Him...

Colossians 3:4 *When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*

Revelation 19:14 *And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses (cf. Revelation 17:14 NIV).*

As we faithfully serve our Lord, we receive the confidence and hope of what He has promised...

- This includes the exemption from the judgements of the Tribulation.

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 (NIV) *For they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. 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.*

1 Thessalonians 5:9 *For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

At the Second Coming there is great reward for those faithful believers who lovingly shared the gospel of Christ' redemption with others...

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 *For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy.*

The truth is that we are a new creation through faith in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17) and it is with blessed anticipation we look forward to returning with Him from heaven to earth at the end of the (7 years) Tribulation...

1 Thessalonians 3:13 *May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.*

In the Rapture, all the church from throughout the ages is “*caught up*” to meet Jesus in the clouds just prior to the Tribulation on the earth...

1 Thessalonians 4:15-18 *According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till 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 each other with these words.*

The Rapture is promised by the Lord...

- In this event all the faithful in Christ receive their resurrected, perfected bodies, made for heaven...

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 *Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

We are preserved in this life through the power of the Holy Spirit, prepared for the day when Christ returns...

1 Thessalonians 5:23 *Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

We should always remember that justice will come in the day of judgement when Jesus comes in the clouds, with His glory and holiness fully being revealed...

2 Thessalonians 1:6-7 (NIV) *God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels.*

A foundational truth of our faith is the certainty of the promised Pre-Trib Rapture of the church...

2 Thessalonians 2:1-2 *Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.*

The Second Coming of Jesus will be the final culminating event of this age when He ends the reign of demonic evil, and brings in His Millennial Kingdom of peace on earth...

2 Thessalonians 2:8 *And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.*

All that is happening in our life today is in the hands of the Lord, and at His appearing the world will fully witness His infinite glory...

1 Timothy 6:14-16 (NIV) *I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time - God the blessed and only Ruler, the King of Kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.*

Every believer is called to faithfulness while living on this earth...

- This is especially true regarding those who assume a position of pastor/teacher as we will each give account before the Lord.

2 Timothy 4:1-2 *In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage —with great patience and careful instruction.*

Scripture promises all who wait patiently, even longing for His appearing, a special reward...

2 Timothy 4:8 *Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will award to me on that day - and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*

2 Corinthians 5:9-10 *Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

As those seeking to live for the Lord today we are being purified and prepared for the new world to come when Jesus returns...

Titus 2:12-14 *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*

Jerusalem and The Last Days According To The Bible

Psalm 122:6

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: May they prosper who love you.

Jerusalem is identified 669 times in the Bible

Zion another 157 times... a total of 826x

Note: Jerusalem is in the Koran 0 times.

God promises in His word to bring Israel back into their own land in the last days from the many nations they had been dispersed among...

Ezekiel 11:17 *Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord God: "I will gather you from the peoples, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel."*

Ezekiel 37:21-22 *Then say to them, "Thus says the Lord God: 'Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land.*

- The return of the Jew to their homeland, along with their rise in power and prosperity in these end times, is truly a modern day miracle!

God has clearly spoken into the history of our world that once Israel returns to "their land" they will never again be removed...

Amos 9:15 *I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them," Says the Lord your God.*

Jeremiah 31:35-36 *This is what the LORD says, he who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar — the LORD Almighty is his name: "Only if these decrees vanish from my sight," declares the LORD, "will Israel ever cease being a nation before me."*

In the last days Jerusalem would be the focus of world events, and it will not go well for those nations who come against it...

Zechariah 12:2-3 *Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces though all nations of the earth are gathered against it.*

Zechariah 12:8-9 *In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the Angel of the LORD before them. It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.*

- Israel's miraculous rebirth and survival, against many foes, testifies of God's faithfulness.

God vows severe judgement on those people who come against Israel, especially those who seek to divide the land...

Joel 3:1-3 *For behold, in those days and at that time, when I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; And I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; They have also divided up My land.*

During the 7 year foretold 'Great Tribulation' (70th Week of Daniel; cf. Daniel 9:24-27) God's elect, Israel, will need God's supernatural intervention to survive...

Matthew 24:21-22 *For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.*

Jeremiah 30:7 *Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.*

All the world, including faithful Israel, will witness the culmination of known human history when Jesus returns...

Revelation 1:7 *Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.*

The foretold revival of Israel will happen when they recognize Jesus as their long awaited Messiah/Savior/King...

Zechariah 12:10-11 *And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem.*

When Jesus returns, and begins His Millennial Kingdom, Jerusalem will be the capital city of our world and where He will rule from...

Jeremiah 3:17 *At that time Jerusalem (i.e., the same Jerusalem you see in the news daily) shall be called the Throne of the LORD, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the Name of the LORD, to Jerusalem. No more shall they follow the dictates of their evil hearts.*

What We Need To Know About The Antichrist

1 John 2:18

Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.

Though there have been many “antichrists” personages throughout history, arrogantly claiming to a substitute savior in the place of Christ, there is coming a specific ‘the Antichrist’ who arises just before the Second Coming.

He is identified as the “lawless one” who inspires total rebellion against God, but he will be soundly completely defeated at the return of Jesus...

2 Thessalonians 2:7-8 *For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.*

This Antichrist will be empowered by Satan to deceive the world...

2 Thessalonians 2:9 *The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*

The Antichrist denies the real Jesus Christ while claiming falsely to be the foretold Messiah...

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 *Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*

The Antichrist will briefly rule the world...

Revelation 13:3-4 *And all the world marveled and followed the beast. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?”*

Revelation 13:7 (NIV) *And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*

The Antichrist, and his kingdom of darkness, will be completely defeated when Jesus returns in all His glory...

Revelation 19:20 *And the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who did mighty miracles on behalf of the beast—miracles that deceived all who had accepted the mark of the beast and who worshiped his statue. Both the beast and his false prophet were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.*

The Gog and Magog Battle: A Prophetic Overview of Ezekiel 38-39

Ezekiel 39:1-3

Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

“Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal.”’

In the battle of Ezekiel 38-39, the nations that come against Israel in the last days are primarily led from the north, and will involve only a few specific nations of the earth...

Ezekiel 38:4-6 *I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses, and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords. Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them, all of them with shield and helmet; Gomer and all its troops; the house of Togarmah from the far north and all its troops—many people are with you.*

(Note: This ‘battle’ is distinguished from the final defeat of evil and Satan by God at the end of the Millennial reign of Jesus; see Revelation 20:7-10).

Ezekiel’s battle of Gog and Magog likely occurs just prior to the Tribulation, or in the first part of the Tribulation period...

Ezekiel 38:8 *In the latter years you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword and gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely.*

- This ‘war’ will come when Israel is living at peace and in security (cf. 1 Thess. 5:3).

Ezekiel describes a nation unprepared and caught off guard by their enemies...

Ezekiel 38:11 (NIV) *You will say, “I will invade a land of unwalled villages; I will attack a peaceful and unsuspecting people—all of them living without walls and without gates and bars.*

- Israel is definitely not at peace now, but they do possess a very unique sense of purpose and destiny, feeling secure in spite of being surrounded by mortal enemies.

In Ezekiel’s prophecy, Gog will be the leader of a great army that attacks the land of Israel...

Ezekiel 38:14-16 *Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to Gog, “Thus says the Lord GOD: “On that day when My people Israel dwell safely, will you not know it? Then you will come from your place out of the far north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great company and a mighty army. 16 You will come up against My people Israel like a cloud, to cover the land. It will be in the latter days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me, when I am hallowed in you, O Gog, before their eyes.*

Before the rise of Antichrist, Gog and his armies will be decisively defeated...

Ezekiel 39:11-12 *It will come to pass in that day that I will give Gog a burial place there in Israel, the valley of those who pass by east of the sea; and it will obstruct travelers, because there they will bury Gog and all his multitude. Therefore they will call it the Valley of Hamon Gog. For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them, in order to cleanse the land.*

- According to Ezekiel, Gog will be defeated by God Himself on the mountains of Israel (aka, the Golan Heights)
- The promised rout and decimation of these invading armies will be so great it will take seven months to bury all of the dead.

Israel will experience a very brief time of peace through the ‘messianic’ person that we recognize as the Antichrist...

Daniel 9:27 *Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.*

- When Israel’s covenant with the Beast/Antichrist is made, this is the beginning of Daniel’s 70th Week, also known as the 7-year Great Tribulation (cf. Jeremiah 30:7).

The Blessed Hope Of Believers

Titus 2:13

While we wait for the blessed hope— the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,

The most significant promise of the NT is that Jesus will return, and this will be bodily, visibly, from heaven, and with the clouds of glory...

Luke 21:27-28 *Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.*" (cf. Matt 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; 14:62).

- The reference to the "cloud" and this supernatural figure is the One who comes in glory as revealed in the prophecy of Daniel 7:13-14
- Jesus referenced this passage to Himself before the high priest and His claim to deity, thus bringing the charge of blasphemy (Matthew 26:62-66)
- Jesus viewed this text in terms of an apocalyptic deliverance!

Acts 3:19-21 *Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you - even Jesus. He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.*

- The "refreshing" the Lord brings is personal revival.
- The restoration that comes with Christ' return is the noted Millennial Kingdom

Acts 17:31 *For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.*

- This "day" is coming, and Jesus is the one "appointed" to enact this judgment and His Resurrection confirms this!

1 Corinthians 1:7 *Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.*

- Our spiritual giftedness is correspondingly linked to our "eagerly waiting" for the return of our Lord!

1 Corinthians 4:5 *Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.*

- When Jesus returns, all that may have been "hidden" in this age will be exposed for what it really is.
- It's a very sobering reminder for us to know that the Lord sees all, including the motives of our heart.
- Believers have nothing to fear because our sins were judged and paid for by Christ on the cross!

The Return Of Jesus Will Fulfill The Promises of God

Acts 1:11

*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.*

Jesus repeatedly spoke of His coming again...

John 14:1-3 *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 there 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.*

- We are promised by the Lord that we have a secure future, therefore we should not allow the troubles of this brief life discourage us.
- Jesus assures us that He will return to bring us to our heavenly home to be with Him.

When Jesus returns in the Rapture he brings the church to their heavenly home, and then rewards us for our faithfulness...

2 Corinthians 5:10 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

Matthew 16:27 *For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.*

Jesus promises when He returns in His Second Coming it will be in the fulness of His glory...

Mark 14:62 *"I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."*

Matthew 25:31 *When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne.*

The Second Coming of Christ is a visual global event that culminates this age...

Matthew 24:27 *For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.*

Jesus said the date of His coming in the Rapture for His church is unknowable...

Matthew 24:36 *But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.*

According to Jesus, His return (in the Rapture) will be unexpected by many...

Matthew 24:44 *Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

When Jesus returns in overwhelming glory at the end of the Tribulation those in rebellion to Him, including the Antichrist himself, will suddenly realize who He truly is!

Matthew 24:30 *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.*

Believers are waiting in anticipation for the day when Jesus rescues them from the Tribulation judgment that will come upon this whole world...

Luke 21:34-36 *Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.*

Revelation 3:10 *Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from (lit. "out of") the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.*

We are eternally secure in Christ, and joyfully wait for our Rapture resurrection...

John 6:39-40 (NIV) *And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.*

The restoration of all creation awaits the redeemed when Jesus returns...

Acts 3:19-21 (NIV) *Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you - even Jesus. He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.*

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ speaks of His authority and qualification to be our judge when He returns...

Acts 17:31 (NIV) *For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.*

A core indicator of being a spirit-led believer is a personal and eager anticipation regarding the Second Coming of Christ...

1 Corinthians 1:7 (NIV) *Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.*

When Jesus returns for His church in the Rapture the truth of who we really are will be exposed to all, and then His rewards for faithfulness will be revealed...

1 Corinthians 4:5 (NIV) *Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.*

The most precious of our Christian tradition, the celebration of the Lord's Supper, was designed to remind us of what Jesus accomplished for us on the cross, as well as foretelling of His return...

1 Corinthians 11:26 *For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.*

The church of Jesus Christ is truly missional, discerning its purpose in our world as it relates to His Second Coming...

Philippians 1:10 (NIV) *So that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ - to the glory and praise of God.*

Throughout the scriptures we have the promise of our eternal destiny, and the transformation of our lowly bodies unto immortality...

Philippians 3:20 *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body.*

When Christ returns we have the promise that we too come back with Him...

Colossians 3:4 *When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

Revelation 19:14 *The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.*

As we faithfully serve our Lord, we receive the confidence and hope of what He has promised, including the exemption from the judgements of the Tribulation...

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 (NIV) *For they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. 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.*

At the Second Coming there is great reward awaiting those believers who lovingly shared the gospel of Christ' redemption with others...

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 *For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy.*

The truth is that we are a new creation through faith in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17) and it is with blessed anticipation we look forward to returning with Him at the end of the Tribulation...

1 Thessalonians 3:13 (NIV) *May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.*

The Rapture will be when all the church, from throughout the ages, are “*caught up*” to meet our Lord Jesus in the clouds just prior to the Tribulation here on the earth...

1 Thessalonians 4:15-18 *According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till 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 each other with these words.*

- The Rapture is promised by the Lord, and is the event when all the faithful in Christ received their resurrected, perfected bodies, made for heaven!

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 *Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

We are preserved in this life through the power of the Holy Spirit, thus prepared for the day when Christ returns...

1 Thessalonians 5:23 *Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

We should always remember that justice will come in the day of judgement when Jesus comes in the clouds, with His glory and holiness fully being revealed...

2 Thessalonians 1:6-7 (NIV) *God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels.*

A foundational truth of our faith is the certainty of the promised Rapture...

2 Thessalonians 2:1-2 *Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come.*

The Second Coming of Jesus will be the culminating event of this age when He ends the reign of evil, and brings in His Millennial Kingdom of peace on earth...

2 Thessalonians 2:8 *And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.*

All that is happening in our life is in the hands of the Lord, and at His appearing the world will fully witness His infinite glory...

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Every believer is called to faithfulness while living on this earth, and this is especially true regarding those who assume a position of pastor/teacher as we will each give account before the Lord...

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Scripture promises all those who wait patiently, even longing for His appearing, a special reward following the Rapture of the church...

2 Timothy 4:8 *Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day - and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*

2 Corinthians 5:9 *Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.*

As believers living in the world today we are being purified and prepared for the new world to come when Jesus returns...

Titus 2:12-14 *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*

As the remnant church, we patiently wait for the Lord to make that upward call in the Rapture, and we will meet Him in the clouds, and forever be with our King...

Hebrews 9:28 *Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.*

John 14:1-3 *Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.*

Those claiming to be the true disciples of Christ long for the fellowship of the saints for we truly need the blessing of mutual encouragement...

Hebrews 10:25 (NIV) *Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the day approaching.*

Patience is a fruit of the spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) and all believers need this for our fallen world as we are tested with trials and tribulations...

James 5:7-9 (NIV) *Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.*

We have a living hope through our faith in Christ and His resurrection, and therefore can maintain absolute confidence in what awaits us at His return...

1 Peter 1:3-5 (NIV) *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade - kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.*

Philippians 1:6 (NIV) *And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*

As Christians we can live in the strength of the Lord, anticipating His return...

1 Peter 1:13 (NIV) *Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

Some will refuse the truth of the gospel, but our love in action may lead them to the mercy of the Lord found in His redemption through Christ...

1 Peter 2:12 *Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

Whatever we may go through in this brief life cannot be compared with the joy we will experience when He returns...

1 Peter 4:13 *But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.*

Jesus is our ‘Good Shepherd’ (John 10:14-15), promising to bring His sheep safely home...

1 Peter 5:4 *And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.*

Psalms 23:1-3 (NIV) *The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name’s sake.*

We are warned that in these last days, both scoffers and mockers would arise, and this will be primarily from those who claim to be following the Lord...

2 Peter 3:3 *Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming?”*

Jude 1:18-19 (NIV) *They said to you, “In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires.” These are the people who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.*

Though we may be overwhelmed at times by the trials and testings of this world, we can remain firm in our faith by the power of the Holy Spirit...

Ephesians 3:16-17 *I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.*

The Rapture promises every believer that our hope and strength are sure...

1 John 3:2-3 *Dear friends, now we are like children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.*

We will return triumphant with Christ at the end of the 7 year Tribulation...

Jude 1:14-15 *Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all.*

At the Second Coming all the world will realize who Jesus is, but it will be too late for those who have lived in rebellion against Him...

Revelation 1:7-8 (NIV) *Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him.*

Absolute Proof That We Are Living In The Last Days

Matthew 24:3

*Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying,
“Tell us, when will these things be?
And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”*

The Bible provides for us, in predictive prophecy, many “signs” that would occur just prior to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to planet earth, and we are told that when all these signs come together, he will be “right at the door” ready to return!

Matthew 24:33-35 *So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.*

- Convergence of the many Biblical signs is significant to understanding the days in which we are living!

Matthew 24:8 *All these are the beginning of sorrows.*

- Note: “sorrows” literally means birth pangs, with the eventual culmination being the glorious return of Jesus Christ to our world!
- Jesus strongly encouraged his disciples (and believers today) to be aware of the myriad of indicators, or ‘signs’, that His return was imminent.
- All this points to our generation that He was specifically speaking to.

Luke 21:28 *Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.*

Spiritual Signs (The ‘Works’ of God)

1. Understanding of Bible prophecy...

Daniel 12:4, 8-9 *But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase...*

Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, “My lord, what shall be the end of these things?” And he said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

- Daniel (5th c. BC) was given specific prophecy that was to be fulfilled in the last days.
- Those who seek the wisdom of the Lord will know and understand prophecy as it is being revealed throughout our world today.

2. Worldwide evangelism (the gospel's universal impact)...

Matthew 24:14 *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

- The message of the gospel covering the world will be fulfilled during the Tribulation period by the 144,000 Jewish evangelists, the Two Witnesses, along with an angel who proclaims the everlasting gospel throughout the world (see Revelation 7:4; 14:4; 11:3-12; 14:6)

3. Authentic revival... Before the Tribulation:

Luke 14:16-24 (the Parable of The Great Banquet)

v. 23 *Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.'*

4. Authentic revival... In The Tribulation:

Revelation 7:9; 14 *After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes... These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

Spiritual Signs (The 'Works' of Darkness)

1. False christs/prophets will deceive many...

Matthew 24:5, 11, 24-25 *For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many... Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many... For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand.*

(cf. Mark 13:6, 21-22)

Luke 21:8 *And He said: "Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He' and, 'The time has drawn near.' Therefore do not go after them.*

2. Apostasy in the professing church...

1 Timothy 4:1 *Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.*

- In the last days, just before the Second Coming of Jesus, we are told explicitly that the 'professing church' will be corrupted and bring in many false and heretical beliefs.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*

3. An unprecedented abandonment of Biblical faith within the church...

2 Timothy 3:1-5 *But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!*

- The Bible adamantly warns of a world culture that would be overwhelmed with an obsession of self-love, and a multitude of destructive false beliefs.
- A veneer of religiosity will be evident in the last days, but this will be rooted not in the Bible, but man's selfish sin nature.

4. Movement toward a one-world religion...

Revelation 13:12 *And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast. (cf. Rev. 13:15)*

2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 *The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*

5. Persecution of true believers...

Matthew 24:9 *Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake (cf. Revelation 6:9-11).*

John 15:18-19 *If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.*

1 Peter 4:12-13 *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.*

6. Outbreak of demonic and occult activity...

2 Thessalonians 2:9 *The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders.*

1 Timothy 4:1 *Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.*

World Political Signs (Israel):

1. Re-establishment of Israel...

Ezekiel 36:26-28 *I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God (cf. Ezekiel 37).*

Israel is key to understanding the purpose and timing of end times prophecy...

- With the return of Israel (May 14, 1948) the prophetic countdown began!

Amos 9:14-15 *I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; They shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; They shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them. I will plant them in their land, And no longer shall they be pulled up From the land I have given them,” Says the LORD your God.*

2. Worldwide religious hostility toward Israel...

Ezekiel 36:7-8 *Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: “I have raised My hand in an oath that surely the nations that are around you shall bear their own shame. But you, O mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to My people Israel, for they are about to come.*

Zechariah 12:1-3 (NIV) *A prophecy: The word of the LORD concerning Israel. The LORD, who stretches out the heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth, and who forms the human spirit within a person, declares: “I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves.*

3. Russia, Iran (Persia), Turkey, along with other nations seek to destroy Israel...

Ezekiel 38:1-3 *Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, “Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal.*

World Political Signs: The Great Reset (New World Order):

1. Movement towards a one-world economy...

Revelation 13:16-18 *He (Antichrist) causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*

2. Reunification of Europe...

Daniel 7:7-8, 24 (NIV) *“After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast—terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns... The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings.*

3. Movement towards a one-world government...

Daniel 2:41-44 (NIV) *Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay. As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay. "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.*

Revelation 17:17 *For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.*

World Political Signs: The Nations At War:

1. Wars and rumors of wars multiplied...

Matthew 24:6 *And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. (cf. Mark 13:7; Luke 21:9)*

2. Kingdom against kingdom (ethnic wars)...

Matthew 24:7 *For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. (cf. Mark 13:8; Luke 21:10)*

3. Demonic 'army' of 200 million bringing massive destruction and death...

Revelation 9:15-16 *So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them.*

Revelation 16:13-14 *And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs. For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty.*

Signs Of A Corrupt and Decadent World Culture:

Lawlessness/Violence/Immorality/Greed/Hedonism...

2 Timothy 3:1-4 *But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God (cf. Matthew 24:12, 37-39; Romans 1:18-32).*

- The progressive degeneration of world culture is visible in this last days generation.

Signs of Nature:

Famine/Earthquakes/Plagues/'Signs' in the Heavens

Matthew 24:7-8 *For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows (cf. Mark 13:8).*

Technological Signs:

1. Computer and laser technology...

Revelation 13:16-18 *It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name. This calls for wisdom. Let the person who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. That number is 666.*

2. Television/satellite communications...

Revelation 11:9-10 *For three and a half days some from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth.*

- The inventions 20th century were clearly foreseen 2,000 years ago in the Bible!

3. Weapons of mass destruction...

Revelation 6:8 *I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword.*

Matthew 24:21 *For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again.*

- Jesus will return at the time when mankind has the means self annihilation.

4. Transhumanism's pursuit of a godless world...

2 Thessalonians 2:4 (speaking of the Anti-christ) *Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped. (cf. Genesis 3:5)*

Psalms 14:1 *The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good.*

Jeremiah 17:9 *The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?*

- A globalist rebellion against God will use technology to create a world devoid of God.

A final consideration: Jesus Christ came to this earth 2000 years ago to be our Savior, and His soon return as our triumphant King is on the near horizon...

2 Peter 3:9 *The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

Being His Witness To Our Generation

Isaiah 52:7

*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news,
who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things,
who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"*

Taking on the heavenly responsibility of bringing the gospel to others in need our most wonderful privilege we have!

God's message will accomplish His purposes wherever is brought forth...

Isaiah 55:10-11 *For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.*

We are each responsible, before the Lord, to be His faithful watchman and witness, especially pastors and spiritual leaders (cf. Ezekiel 33:1-9)...

Ezekiel 3:18-19 *When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.*

Jesus encourages His church to let their light shine before men, thus revealing the God we worship...

Matthew 5:14-16 *You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*

We are commanded to share with others the good news of Jesus, and this is our primary mission as believers...

Matthew 28:19-20 *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.*

Acts 1:8 *But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

As we confess Jesus before men, we are promised eternal heavenly blessings...
Luke 12:8-9 *Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.*

We are responsible before God to faithfully represent Him before others today...
2 Corinthians 5:20 *Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.*

What Are The Biblical Reasons For The Second Coming of Christ

Revelation 19:11, 14

*Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse.
And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True...
And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean,
followed Him on white horses.*

Christ is returning to keep His promise to His own beloved and faithful church...

John 14:1-3 *“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.”*

At the Pre-Tribulational Rapture upward call of the church, death will be defeated, and believers will receive the eternal resurrected bodies...

1 Corinthians 15:51-54 *Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” (cf. 1 Thess. 4:13-18)*

Philippians 3:20-21 *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*

1 John 3:2 *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*

Christ is returning to fulfill His Covenantal promises with Israel...

The Old Testament is filled with promises regarding God’s covenant to Abraham, and that through him all the world would be blessed.

Genesis 12:1-3 (NIV) *The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.*

(Note: Genesis 15:5 reveals God’s plans for the Jewish people and their land)

The Messianic promise to Abraham was fulfilled perfectly in Jesus...

Galatians 3:16 (NIV) *The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed.*

Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “and to your seed,” meaning one person, who is Christ.

This same covenant is confirmed with Israel through the life of David...

2 Samuel 7:16 (NIV) *Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever. Nathan reported to David all the words of this entire revelation.*

There are a myriad of reaffirmations of God’s covenant promises to Israel that are still in effect, unbreakable and undeniable...

Psalms 89:1-4 *I will sing of the mercies of the LORD forever; With my mouth will I make known Your faithfulness to all generations. For I have said, “Mercy shall be built up forever; Your faithfulness You shall establish in the very heavens.” “I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn to My servant David: ‘Your seed I will establish forever, And build up your throne to all generations.’”*

(cf. Isaiah 11, 35, 40; Jeremiah 23, Ezekiel 34-39, Zechariah 12-14)

Satan is identified as the ‘god’ of this present world system and Jesus is returning to issue forth his final defeat...

2 Corinthians 4:4 *The god of this age (Satan) has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

Revelation 20:1-3 *And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended.*

Christ is returning to restore to humanity what had been lost to Satan’s deceit in the Garden...

Genesis 3:15 *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.*

This verse is the ‘story line’ of the whole Bible...

- Satan would do damage to Christ and His Kingdom at the cross of Calvary, but he would receive a mortal blow through Jesus death and victorious resurrection, thus purchasing redemption for all who would believe in Him.
- Satan will eventually face a final judgement and be cast into the Lake of Fire forever.

Revelation 20:10 *The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*

Christ is returning to this earth to be exalted...

- Jesus' first coming to this earth was in obscurity and humiliation.
- At Calvary, He shed His blood on the cross for our sins, and that was the last time the 'unconverted' world would ever see Jesus that way.
- Three days later He arose bodily from the dead, showing that He had conquered death.
- His return will be in glory and power!

Hebrews 9:27-28 *And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.*

Revelation 1:7 *Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.*

Zechariah 12:10 *And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.*

How should our study of the Second Coming affect our life...

Romans 13:11-14 (NIV) *And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here...*

So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.

The expectation of Christ's return should shape everyday life for believer's in this generation...

- 1. Inspires Holiness:** Knowing Jesus could return at any moment motivates believers to live pure lives and shed habits they would be ashamed of in His presence.
- 2. Provides Comfort and Hope:** The promise of a renewed creation—where pain, mourning, and injustice are permanently removed—offers peace and endurance through present trials.
- 3. Encourages Faithful Work:** Rather than abandoning daily responsibilities, believers are instructed to actively "*occupy*" (Luke 19:13) their time by serving others and working with diligence.
- 4. Motivates Evangelism:** The certainty of a final judgment creates urgency to share the gospel so that others may find salvation before His return.
- 5. Promotes Forgiveness:** Believers can leave justice in God's hands, allowing them to endure present injustices without seeking revenge when we are treated unjustly.

Living Your Life With Eternity In Mind

Ecclesiastes 3:11

He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.

The tension between living for today and looking for tomorrow is one of the realities of the Christian life...

- We often find ourselves caught between the here-and-now and the hereafter.
- We should be ready for Jesus to come at any time.
- On the other hand, we each have God-given responsibilities to fulfill in this world in the meantime.

1 Corinthians 15:58 *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*

Preparing for Christ's return is something we all must do for ourselves...

- No one else can get our hearts ready to meet God in that day, we each need to do this for ourselves!
- Jesus, in view of His Second Coming, urges us to keep watching, be ready, and keep serving Him faithfully

Matthew 24:42, 44 *Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming... Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

Revelation 22:12 *"And behold, I am coming quickly (i.e., speedily; without delay), and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work."*

Jesus left His church specific instructions about what we ought to be doing while awaiting His return, urging us to share the 'good news' of the gospel as we go...

Mark 16:15 (NIV) *He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."*

- Our Lord taught His true disciples to be His witnesses in every generation, even to the farthest ends of the earth.

Calling men and women to repent, and believe the gospel is the twofold nature of our personal evangelist enterprise...

Mark 1:15 *The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.*

This command emphasizes the evangelistic and missionary nature of the ministry of every true follower of Jesus...

As believers living in these last days we have one clarion call regarding our primary purpose and mission, sharing the gospel with the whole world!

Acts 1:8 *But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. (cf. Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:19-20)*

We are called to be His “salt and light” and to influence our surrounding culture as we display God’s truth to others...

Matthew 5:13-16 *You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*

We are called to be “ambassadors for Christ” sharing the gospel message of peace with God for all who believe

2 Corinthians 5:17-20 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.*

Discernment In Navigating The Internet

Daniel 12:4

But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.

The Bible foretold that in the last days technology would provide an information explosion, and here's what we need to do!

We must be discerning...

1 John 4:1 *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

Colossians 2:8 *Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.*

- Whether through Facebook, YouTube, Telegram, etc., we need to compare what is being taught and promoted with the truth of the Bible.

We shouldn't be entangled with foolish debate, whether online or in person...

1 Timothy 6:20-21 *O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge.*

We, as believers, should be set apart for doing good unto others...

Romans 12:2 *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

Ephesians 2:10 *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

It is wise to consciously pursue what God has clearly spoken in His word...

1 John 2:15-16 *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.*

Always remember, God is watching...

Psalms 119:37 *Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, and revive me in Your way.*

- The spiritual battle for the mind is seen throughout our postmodern culture today.
- This is most prevalent in the deceptive evil that is communicated via the myriad of social platforms found online.

Our mind should be purposely fixed to do all for the glory of God, and this includes time spent on the Internet!

1 Corinthians 10:31 *Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

Competition for the mind will be tested when we spend too much time online...

Colossians 3:17 *And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*

- The unfortunate truth is that many believers today are overly involved in social media, and this to their own harm.

Revelation 2:4 *Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.*

We have some steadfast reminders regarding what we need to do in the Bible...

Colossians 3:10 *Put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.*

As those who have been redeemed in Christ we have the daily assignment to diligently take God's word to heart...

2 Timothy 2:15 *Be diligent (study) to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

Proverbs 4:23 *Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.*

True wisdom can only come from the Lord, not from our fellow fallen men...

Ephesians 5:17 *Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*

- God's will for your life is clearly expounded on throughout the inspired scriptures!

We need to think rightly, and live righteously...

Philippians 4:8 *Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.*

As believers we should pursue Christ and His will for our lives above all (including our various activities on the Internet!)...

Philippians 1:21; 3:14 *For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain... I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

The Greatest Prophecy Ever Foretold

Daniel 12:1

There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered.

Daniel 9:24-27 (Dateline: circa 500 BC)

24 Seventy weeks are determined, for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.

A specific time period of “seventy sevens” or 490 years (70 x 7= 490) is given to Daniel for the completion of this prophecy (Note: “weeks” = Heb. ‘shabua’ simply means seven)...

- Notice who it is directed to, “*your people*”, or specifically the Jewish nation (cf. v.16).
- And that it speaks of “*your holy city*” that is at the epicenter of this prophecy, referring to Jerusalem (cf. v.16).
- Also, take note that this is clearly referring to a future event that would “*bring in everlasting righteousness*” and be understood as the unprecedented culmination of world history as we know it.

25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.

We are commanded (as Daniel was) to “*know and understand*” the words of this very important prophecy from the Lord...

- The prophetic launch begins with a certain “*command*” (a documented historical event).
- This prophecy of the coming Messiah is both remarkable and extremely precise.

There was only one commandment to restore Jerusalem and its wall...

On March 14th, 445 BC (as confirmed by modern archaeology), King Artaxerxes I of Persia issued the command to rebuild Jerusalem and specifically included its wall.

- The book of Nehemiah records this account of rebuilding the city and its wall. (cf. Nehemiah 2:2-9)
- This portion of Daniel’s prophecy totals 69 ‘weeks’ or sevens (shabua) of years and chronologically this totals 173,880 days.

The long-awaited Messiah Savior would arrive and publicly be received by His people exactly on this date...

- On April 1, 32 AD (10 Nissan Heb. calendar) Jesus was declared and proclaimed for the first time in a public setting to be the Messiah, exactly as foretold!

26 *“And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.*

Immediately following this fulfillment the Messiah would be “cut off” (Heb. karath, literally means “executed”)...

- It would appear to be an absolute defeat for Messiah.
- The “*people of the prince who is to come*” refers to the Roman empire and in 70 AD
- the armies of Rome came and destroyed Jerusalem and temple.

The Jewish nation was crushed and the people were either killed or scattered throughout the world.

27 *Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.”*

The “he” is the “prince” of v. 26, it is this ruler (aka, ‘the Antichrist’) who would bring a “covenant” or peace treaty to a reestablished nation of Israel (along with other nations) in the last days...

- This final completion of Daniel’s prophecy is referring to the missing “seven” or 7 years (cf. v.24). This is often spoken of as the 70th week of Daniel.
- This “prince” is also identified as the “man of sin” and he breaks this peace “covenant” mid-way (after 3.5 years) into this final 7 year period (called the ‘Great Tribulation’).

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 *Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.* (cf. Revelation 13:5-7)

It is at the end of this time (with the completion of Daniel’s prophecy) that Jesus returns to this earth to bring in “everlasting righteousness”...

2 Thessalonians 2:7-8 *For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.*

The final word from Daniel...

Daniel 12:8-10 *Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, “My lord, what shall be the end of these things?” And he said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.*

Facing The Reality Of Lukewarm Christians

Revelation 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

This often quoted passage has been used to emphasize how Christ invites us to personal faith in Himself, but in actuality, Jesus is standing outside this Laodicean church because they have rejected His presence among them!

- Religious bondage is the most dangerous of all deceptions.
- This false spirituality often convinces its adherents that they are righteous before our holy God when in truth they are not.

God knows everything about who we really are and that which is in our hearts...

Revelation 3:15-17 *I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.*

Those of 'lukewarm faith' are not firmly grounded in God's truth, therefore they are forever unstable...

James 1:6-8 *But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*

False converts live contrary to those of true believers, living for what is merely temporal of this world...

James 4:4 *Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*

Matthew 15:8 *These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.*

According to the Bible, outward actions, like merely attending church, may be a key part in self deception among lukewarm Christians...

1 John 3:10 (NIV) *By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.*

1 John 2:15-16 *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.*

We are forewarned that in the end times there would be an abandonment of the Lord, and His word, by those who actually deny the truth...

2 Timothy 4:3 *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers, and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*

2 Timothy 3:1, 5 *But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves... having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!*

As believers, we are called to proclaim the only hope for mankind, redemption that Jesus alone can bring...

Matthew 5:13 *You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.*

Matthew 12:30 (NIV) *Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.*

Knowing The Measure Of Your Days

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

For our light affliction, which is but but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

As each of us walks out our own journey of life we experience 'seasons' of transitions, times and events that will forever change our ultimate destiny.

It has been noted that we are living on the 'dash' or the time from birth to death, and to discover our life purpose is what this is all about...

Ecclesiastes 3:2-4

*A time to be born, and a time to die; A time to plant,
And a time to pluck what is planted; A time to kill, And a time to heal;
A time to break down, And a time to build up; A time to weep,
And a time to laugh; A time to mourn, and a time to dance.*

Because we are made in the image of God, we have an inborn inquisitiveness about eternal realities...

Ecclesiastes 3:11 *He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.*

- *Eternity in their hearts* refers to a deep-seated, compulsive drive to transcend our mere mortality by knowing the meaning of our existence.

We can find peace when we come to know our eternal Creator, and even then, we admittedly know God only in part...

1 Corinthians 13:12 *For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.*

In these moments of refinement we may wonder just what is coming next, or even have great anxiety for unknown expectations...

Philippians 4:6-7 *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

Through it all, we each can confidently know that beyond the circumstances of this present day there is a designed purpose for the events of the now...

Jeremiah 29:11 *For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

Romans 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

Even in the midst of the darkest of times, our Creator is watching over our lives...

Psalms 46:1-3 (NIV) *God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.*

- Through every storm and trial in your life, the Lord is all the calm you need!
- As we put our trust and faith in the Lord we receive His abundant strength and hope.

Essential Wisdom For These Last Days

Matthew 7:15-16

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits.

Nothing in our lives today should be more encouraging than the truth...

- In fact, we are consistently exhorted throughout the Bible to pursue only what is true, and to be discerning regarding to those noted “false prophets” who deceptively speak a fraudulent word.

Our need for God's wisdom in discernment is especially important in this generation where so many claim to be speaking for the Lord...

1 John 4:1 *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

As followers of Jesus Christ we should passionately crave a spirit of discernment as we personally study the inspired scripture in depth...

2 Timothy 2:15 *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

Acts 17:11 *These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.*

Hebrews 5:14 (NIV) *But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.*

We are in a never ending battle for truth as we live in a fallen world...

- This challenge of our hearts and minds can only be overcome as we are transformed by knowing and applying the truth of God's word to our life each day.

Romans 12:2 (NIV) *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

True love is grounded in the knowledge of God's will and purposes, and we are called to “*speak the truth in love*” (Ephesians 4:15)...

- Therefore, we must each take responsibility to lovingly grow in discerning whether the teachings of men are congruent with what our Lord has spoken in His inspired word.

Philippians 1:9-10 *And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ.*

- The wisdom that will guide your soul through the maze of this journey here on earth rest solely in the domain of the Lord of heaven above.

- All who truly seek in His trustworthy and perfect promises from the scriptures will be secure.

The Bible teaches us that we are all responsible to discern between what is truth and error, with “righteous judgment”...

- Throughout our world today the popular mantra of many is “*judge not, that you be not judged*” (Matthew 7:1).
- Many assume that no one should ever ‘judge’ the truth claims or beliefs of another, but this is simply not reasonable or possible for all assume what they believe is the truth!

We have been strongly forewarned regarding false teachers who would come...

2 Timothy 4:3-4 *The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*

The best way to distinguish the doctrine of those who claim to be speaking for God is to compare what they teach with what the scriptures actual say...

1 Thessalonians 5:21 *Test all things; hold fast what is good.*

- Again, it is the constant admonition found throughout the inspired canon (Old and New Testaments) for us to be aware of the cleverness of false teachers, and this is especially noteworthy for us today (cf. 1 Timothy 6:3-5).

Colossians 2:8 (NIV) *See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.*

Bible prophecy reminds us that in the days, just before the return of Jesus Christ, that many false prophets would come in His name, deceiving multitudes...

Matthew 24:4-5, 11, 24-25 *And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many... and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people... For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand.*

We have the strong admonition that nothing should be added to the Biblical revelation which is complete and sufficient...

Revelation 22:18-19 *I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book. (see also Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32 and Proverbs 30:5-6).*

Is Jesus Coming Soon?

James 5:8-9 (NIV)

*You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.
Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters,
or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!*

The Bible teaches that Jesus' return for His church is imminent, which means the Rapture could happen at any moment...

- The apostles seem to have believed that Jesus could possibly come back in their lifetime.

1 Peter 1:20 *He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.*

Hebrews 1:1-2 *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.*

It appears that Jesus also intended for us to believe and “be ready” for His expected return...

Luke 12:40 *Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

Luke 21:36 (NIV) *Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.*
(cf. Mark 13:33)

Because no one can predict exactly when He is coming again (though we can know the season), we should live each day with expectancy...

Matthew 24:36 *But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.*

- Jesus wants every generation to live with the conscious awareness that He may suddenly appear and we will have to give an accounting of the way He finds us (cf. Luke 12:38ff).

What did Jesus Himself teach about His return...

Revelation 22:20 *He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.” Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!*

- The Greek word for “quickly” is tachy, which is could be translated “soon” or “quickly,” means without unnecessary delay. It does not mean immediately.

Everything is moving along according to God's perfect timetable...

Peter reassures us concerning all prophetic events that God's timing is perfect!

2 Peter 3:9 *The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

- In this light we are to understand that Jesus' return is advancing according to God's sovereign plan for this age.

Jesus is coming to Rapture His church, without delay, at the right time...

John 14:1-2 *Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.*

The Signs of the Times: Watchman, Convergence, and Birth Pangs...

Psalm 127:1 *Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.*

Today's believers are to be a "watchman" but the remnant voice of today's church are few...

Ezekiel 3:17-19 *"Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me: When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.*

All the authentic followers of Jesus are called to be faithful "watchman" who warn of others what is coming, according to the prophecies for these last days.

- God will hold each of us accountable to our "watchman" responsibility in this world.

Convergence of the signs of our times, and the unique nature of the days in which we are living...

Matthew 24:33-34 *So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.*

Luke 21:28 *Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.*

The 'birth pangs' (literally, sorrows) are the prophetic events foretold in the Bible that are moving history to an appointed destiny...

Mark 13:5-8 *Jesus said to them: "Watch out that no one deceives you. Many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and will deceive many. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains. (cf. Matthew 24:8)*

We can see where our world today is heading, it is exactly what Jesus taught and warned us about for the Last Days...

Matthew 24:21 *For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

Though our world may be falling apart, we are NOT because we have hope...

Titus 2:11-13 *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.*

What The Bible Says About A True Prophet Of God

1 John 4:1

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

According to the Bible, a true prophet of God will NEVER speak falsely a prophecy given to him from God...

Deuteronomy 18:21-22 *How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?" If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously...*

- We are commanded to not listen to or to follow false prophets!

In the church today those who claim to speak prophetically will clearly expound upon Jesus and His teachings, not themselves...

Revelation 19:10 *I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."*

Biblical prophecy was never the thoughts or ideas of men, but direct revelation from God...

2 Peter 1:21 (NIV) *For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

- The source of authentic prophecy is validated by the Lord revealing His perfect truth through people.

The consistent warning Jesus gave was that false prophets will be among the true church, especially as we approach His return...

Matthew 7:15 *Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.*

Matthew 24:24 *For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.*

The Bible adamantly warns us of an overwhelming apostasy just before the Second Coming of Christ...

Matthew 24:11 *And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray.*

- These false prophets/teachers will communicate a message that is deceptively attractive, but false and dangerous (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3)
- Much of the 'church' will be dominated by apostasy just before Jesus returns.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*

Jesus gave us clear and specific warning of the depth of false teachers who would deceive many (including themselves)...

Matthew 7:21-23 *Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'*

- Claiming to be a prophet (with supposed signs and wonders) is not to be the test that they are actually from God.
- Only those whose lives and ministry faithfully reflect the truths of the Bible are in actuality His ministers in every generation.
- Mere popularity and fame should never be the validation of authenticity.

Prophecy in the Bible can be predictive (foretelling), or expositional (forthtelling), but it will always be guided in truth by the work of the Holy Spirit...

1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 *Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.*

- In much of the church today the essential teaching of Biblical prophecy is despised (i.e., ignored or mocked).

2 Peter 3:3-4 *Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."*

The Nephilim and End Times Demonic Deception

Job 1:6

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.

Who were the Nephilim...

- The Nephilim (“*fallen ones; giants*”) were the offspring of the “*sons of God*” (fallen angels/demons) and daughters of men in Genesis 6:1–4
- There has been debate as to the identity of the “sons of God” and who they could be?
- Why would the demons (fallen angels) do such a thing? The Bible does not specifically give us the answer to this question.

Demons are evil, twisted beings—so nothing they do should surprise us...

- As to a distinct motivation, one speculation is that the demons were attempting to pollute the human bloodline in order to prevent the coming of the Messiah.
- God had promised that the Messiah would one day “*crush the head*” of the serpent, Satan.

Genesis 3:15 *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.*

- These demons in Genesis 6 were possibly seeking to prevent Satan’s ultimate defeat through Jesus (in order to make it impossible for a sinless “seed of the woman” to be born).

What happened to the Nephilim...

- The Nephilim were one of the primary reasons for the great flood in Noah’s time.
- Immediately after the mention of Nephilim, God’s Word says

Genesis 6:5 *Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

- God proceeded to flood the entire earth, bringing a cataclysmic judgment on the earth with only Noah, his family, and the animals on the ark surviving. All else perished, including the Nephilim.

Were there Nephilim after the flood...

Genesis 6:4 (NIV) *The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward.*

- It seems that the demons repeated their horrid sin sometime after the flood as well.
- However, it likely took place to a much lesser extent than it did prior to the flood.
- When the Israelites spied out the land of Canaan, they reported back to Moses...

Numbers 13:33 (NIV) *We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes.*

What prevents more Nephilim returning today...

- According to the Bible, God put an end to them.

Jude 1:6 *And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.*

These demonic offspring, the Nephilim, are the ones who are bound with “everlasting chains” (Jude 1:6)...

2 Peter 2:4 *For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment.*

Could an alien deception be part of the end times, as well as demonic?

- We know that the events surrounding the end times, as described in the Bible, will include a powerful deception!

2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 *And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

Matthew 24:24 *For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.*

- In recent decades interest has been rising in the theory that this deception may include so called ‘aliens’ from another planet or inter-dimension.

This theory is plausible from a Biblical, Christian perspective...

- Although the Bible gives us no word about whether or not aliens exist, we should note that there is no inclusion of them in the creation account in Genesis, and no mention of them throughout the scriptures.
- The Bible does tell us about visitors from another world—the spiritual world.

An unprecedented deception is the primary warning of these last days...

- The Bible reveals to us that the world will unite under the power of a one person, known as the Antichrist.
- In order to achieve an agreement between all the world’s religions, it would make sense for the ‘uniter’ to come from an entirely new source—possibly claiming to be from an extraterrestrial origin (or even being future humanity in time travel).
- It is hard to imagine one religion becoming head of all the others, unless new, unearthly knowledge were the source of the appeal and power of the new global ‘religion.’

2 Corinthians 11:14-15 *For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.*

This deception could provide an answer to the problem of earth's origins...

- The scientific theory that the evolution of life on earth was spontaneously generated still provides no answer for life's beginnings/origins.
- There is scientific evidence for a beginning of the universe (time, space, and matter), but that still doesn't explain what caused this to occur.
- If so called alien 'beings' arrived and gave us an extraterrestrial explanation for life on earth, as well as the origins of the world religions, it would be persuasive to many.

What should be our faithful response to all this? We should not fear!

- The Lord promises that He will never leave or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5).
- He also will strengthen and uphold us (Matthew 10:31; Isaiah 41:10).

Some Important 'End Times' Reminders

- Demons (fallen angels) are not omnipotent, nor are they omnipresent.
- Jesus said that His return would be like the lightning, easily visible to all. Don't be fooled!
- Be wary of any person or being that produces 'signs and wonders' without biblical fidelity or the presence of obedience to the Lord Jesus.
- Look out for those who claim to provide a way to unite the world religions or governments (cf. Revelation 13:5-8)
- Don't follow or partake with those who promote unnatural sexual relationships which are contrary to creation (Genesis 6:4; Jude 1:6-7).
- Don't give heed to those who deny that Jesus is God (2 John 1:7), or who present a "substitute" Jesus ("a god but not the God"; merely a good teacher; just a prophet or simply a wise human; or even a alien (interdimensional being)).

Our Conclusion Regarding End Times Deception

If demons manifesting as aliens are part of the end times scenario, we should remember that they, too, are created beings, subject to a sovereign God, and ultimately answerable to Him.

- No matter what happens to us on the earth, you can absolutely trust Jesus, as your Savior, Redeemer, and Protector of your soul!

Psalms 9:10 *And those who know Your name will put their trust in You, for You, Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You.*

Apathy, Apostasy, and Abandonment

Hebrews 3:12

Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.

So many have departed from the remnant church in our generation as evidenced by their apathy towards the Lord...

Revelation 3:14-16 *“And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.*

As Jesus foretold long ago, the ‘church’ that would exist just prior to His return would be “lukewarm” and in real danger before God...

Revelation 3:17-18 *Because you say, I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked — I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.*

This last days Laodicean ‘church’ would be unaware of their woeful state, being distracted by so many things (e.g., performance-driven christianity)...

Revelation 3:19-20 *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.*

- This false church is seemingly unaware that Jesus is not even among them anymore as he stands outside their organized religion as such.

In the Last Days, the Bible foretells that many in the church will be apostate...

1 Timothy 4:1 *Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons*

There has been a wholesale departure of Biblical Christianity in this generation...

A complete denial of many of the central tenets of the faith (e.g., the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible; the acceptance of pluralism and the rejection of salvation by grace alone, through Christ alone; denial of our accountability before a holy God).

In the Last Days, as foretold in prophecy, many in the church will be apostate...

2 Peter 3:3-4 (NIV) *Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.*

- It is common in this generation for people to openly mock the Rapture, and show little interest in the Second Coming of Jesus
- It appears that the majority of pastors have no desire to teach on Bible prophecy, therefore they have failed to be a shepherd 'watchman' before their flock.
(see Ezekiel 33:1-7)

2 Thessalonians 2:1-2 *Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.*

Just as in the days in the first century, many false teachers have gone out sowing confusion and discord among the believers regarding the return of Jesus...

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 *Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*

In the Last Days, many in the worldwide 'church' will abandon the faith...

- For some, when they hear the gospel truth, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts (Mark 4:15).
- For others, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; but they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble (Mark 4:16-17)
- And then there are those ones who hear the word, and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. (Mark 4:18-19)

Also, it should be noted that in the Last Days, there will be the faithful fellowship of the remnant church...

Luke 8:15 *But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.*

Matthew 13:37-43 *He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age,*

and the reapers are the angels. Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

The true disciples of Jesus can have confident expectation of their future...

Hebrew 10:23-25 *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*

Replacement Theology Is Not Biblical: A Biblical Analysis of God's Covenant Promises To Israel

Genesis 12:1-3

The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

The inaugurating promise of God to Abraham and his future family, Israel...

- They would be a great nation.
- Those who oppose them (the Jews/Israel) would face God's judgement.
- They would be a blessing to all people (through Messiah's redemption work).

Note: This promise from the Lord is repeatedly put forth throughout the scriptures for the people/nation of Israel, and was not only regarding Abraham.

The land of Israel has been forever deeded to the Jewish people by God...

Genesis 13:14-15 (NIV) *The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.*

The land of Israel has been given through God's covenant to Abraham, Issac, and Jacob, as well as their descendants...

Genesis 35:10-12 *God said to him, "Your name is Jacob, but you will no longer be called Jacob; your name will be Israel." So he named him Israel. And God said to him, "I am God Almighty; be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will be among your descendants. The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I also give to you, and I will give this land to your descendants after you.*

Deuteronomy 30:4-5 *Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the LORD your God will gather you and bring you back. He will bring you to the land that belonged to your ancestors, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your ancestors.*

Israel has been given by the Lord exact and specific boundaries that have become their possession...

Genesis 15:18-21 *On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates— the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."*

The boundaries of Israel are clearly delineated Biblically...

Joshua 1:4 *Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates —all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west.*

Deuteronomy 11:24 *Every place where you set your foot will be yours: Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the Euphrates River to the Mediterranean Sea.*

Through Abraham's obedience, the Lord confirmed and greatly blessed His covenant with him and his offspring, the Jewish people...

Genesis 22:15-18 *Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son— blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."*

The blessings of the Jew, which has covered this whole earth, is the salvation brought to us through the Jewish Messiah, Jesus Christ...

Genesis 28:13-14 *And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: "I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*

Deuteronomy 4:40 *You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time."*

- The promises of God to Israel are for "all time" and include both as a people group, as well as regarding the land He has given them!

God reaffirms His unbreakable covenant promise to Israel in the Old and New Testament...

Deuteronomy 29:12-13 *You are standing here in order to enter into a covenant with the LORD your God, a covenant the LORD is making with you this day and sealing with an oath, to confirm you this day as his people, that he may be your God as he promised you and as he swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.*

Romans 11:1-2 *I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew.*

The covenant of the Lord with Israel will never be broken...

Jeremiah 31:35-37 *This is what the LORD says, he who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar —the LORD Almighty is his name: “Only if these decrees vanish from my sight,” declares the LORD, “will Israel ever cease being a nation before me.” This is what the LORD says: “Only if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth below be searched out will I reject all the descendants of Israel because of all they have done,” declares the LORD..*

The covenant of God with Israel is unconditional, and cannot be thwarted!

Amos 9:14-15 *I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; They shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; They shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them. I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them,” Says the LORD your God.*

- God promises that He will bring Israel back to the land in the last days.
- They will prosper greatly in their land at that time.
- Once they return to their land, they will never be removed again.

In the Last Days, just prior to the return of Jesus, Israel and the Jews will face worldwide anti-semitism, but the Lord will bring forth His victory for them...

Zechariah 12:1-3 *The burden of the word of the LORD against Israel. Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him “Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it.*

Zechariah 14:2-3 *For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem... Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle.*

The Soon Coming Of Christ' Millennial Kingdom

Isaiah 65:25

The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, and dust will be the serpent's food.

They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain," says the LORD.

At the end of this present age, Christ will return to usher in the Millennium, and this is an intermediate (1000 years) kingdom between the present age and the eternal age.

- At the beginning of the Millennium Satan bound so he can no longer tempt the nations.

Revelation 20:1-3 *Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished.*

- Christ will rule with believers from throughout the ages over the entire world from Jerusalem (Revelation 20:4-6)

What are some of the descriptive names of the Millennium?

The Kingdom of God...

Mark 1:15 *"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."*

The Kingdom of Heaven...

Matthew 5:3 *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Renewal of All Things...

Matthew 19:28 (NIV) *Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."*

The World to Come...

Hebrews 2:5 *For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.*

The Time All Things Are Restored...

Acts 3:21 (NIV) *Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.*

Who are the inhabitants of the Millennial Kingdom that is coming...

At the end of the Tribulation rebellion, Christ will return and bring peace and justice to the earth as King during His Millennial Kingdom

- Raptured believers will enter the Millennial Kingdom in their resurrection bodies.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 *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.

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 *Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

Believers who survived the Tribulation enter the Kingdom in mortal bodies...

- When Christ returns he will separate believers from unbelievers and only those who have called upon the Lord will enter the Millennial kingdom. This is the Sheep/Goat Judgement (see Matthew 25:31-46).
- These Tribulation saints will have families and give birth to children during the Millennial Kingdom (cf. Isaiah 11:6-8), repopulating planet earth.

Judgement is the fate of all those who have rejected Christ...

Matthew 25:31-34 *When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:*

This teaching of judgement before the beginning of the Millennium is illustrated in many parables about the Kingdom which Christ gave...

- The parable of the wheat and the tares in Matthew 13:36-43.
- The parable of the good fish and bad fish in Matthew 13:47-50.

What are characteristics of the Millennial Kingdom...

- During the Millennium, Christ will rule the world from Jerusalem, and the nations of the earth will worship and submit to him.

Zechariah 8:3 (NIV) *This is what the LORD says: "I will return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the Faithful City, and the mountain of the LORD Almighty will be called the Holy Mountain.*

Isaiah 9:6-7 *For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

The Millennium will be a blessing for all people as they experience peace, righteousness, justice...

Isaiah 2:4 *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 hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.*

During the Millennium Kingdom the saints will rule with Christ...

Revelation 2:26 *To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations.*

Revelation 5:10 *You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.*

In the Millennium all the world will see God's blessing over nature...

Romans 8:20-21 *For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.*

This will be an age where Christ reigns, apart from Satan and his influence...

- It will be a time of rich blessing for all people and creation.

At the end of the Millennium, Satan will be set free for a short time to tempt people to rebellion...

Revelation 20:7-8 *Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth.*

Multitudes will revolt against Christ, demonstrating the evilness of the human heart, but Christ will judge them quickly...

Revelation 20:9-10 *They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are.*

After this the final Great White Throne Judgement takes place...

Revelation 20:11-12 (NIV) *Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.*

Then the family of God will enter the eternal state, dwelling with Him forevermore...

Revelation 21:3 *Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.*

What Jesus Taught About The Kingdom of God

Luke 17:20-21

The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst.

Regarding the Kingdom, Jesus clearly identified it with a future worldwide revolution that would occur on the earth...

- We are promised that the day will come when God will gather His redeemed from all the nations in peace and His name will be honored throughout the whole world!
- The Kingdom of God is present among all who have come to Jesus, receiving Him as their Savior and King, and the day will arrive when He returns in all His marvelous glory for bring forth His Millennial Kingdom throughout the whole earth!

In His first coming, Jesus unequivocally taught His kingdom rule over this world would not be inaugurated at that time...

John 18:36 *Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."*

Jesus commands us to set our daily priorities from an eternal perspective...

Matthew 6:33 *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

- We should seek to fill our thoughts and desires with God's revelational truth.
- As believers, our primary task each day is simply to trust and obey the Lord.

The Bible consistently tells us that we must turn from sin (i.e., repent), and fully to the Lord, in order to enter God's Kingdom...

Matthew 3:1-2 *In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"*

Matthew 4:17 *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

Certain people are more receptive to seeking the Kingdom...

Matthew 5:3 *Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

- Those who are humble and broken in spirit (not proud) are ready for gospel truth.
- Throughout the scriptures we see that God stands against those who are proud.

James 4:6 *God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.*

Proverbs 29:23 *A man's pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honor.*

Obeying God's commands yields great rewards in His Kingdom...

Matthew 5:19 *Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

Only those who are made righteous, through faith in Christ, will enter God's eternal Kingdom...

Matthew 5:20 *For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.*

God's Kingdom is open to those who seek to do His will...

Matthew 7:21 *Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.*

The Kingdom of God follows the Good Shepherd, Jesus, and such people will experienced the touch of heaven and restoration of life...

Matthew 9:35-36 *Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.*

The Kingdom of God is reserved for those who walk humbly before God...

Matthew 18:3 *Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.*

James 4:6 *But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."*

Entering God's Kingdom cost someone everything in a worldly sense, but it is worth more than anything this life can offer us...

Matthew 13:44 *Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.*

As we surrender our life to Jesus will will discover the He is that very "door" unto the Kingdom of God...

John 10:9-10 *I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture... I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*

God's Kingdom will fully arrive only when Jesus returns in all His glory...

Luke 21:31-32 (NIV) *Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near. “Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.*

Only those who are spiritually reborn through personal faith in Christ can enter God’s Kingdom...

John 3:3 *Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”*

Living for God’s Kingdom is not easy this side of eternity, but Christ gives us His own supernatural strength and hope...

John 16:33 *These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*

Acts 1:8 *But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

As believers in Christ, we should follow the example of Paul, seeking to share with others about the Kingdom of God...

Acts 28:31 *He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ —with all boldness and without hindrance!*

We enter the Kingdom of God, through faith in Christ, and every aspect of our life here on this earth is affected...

Romans 14:17 (NIV) *The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

Philippians 4:7 (NIV) *And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

God has called you into His Kingdom...

1 Thessalonians 2:11-12 *You know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.*

The Kingdom is exhibited in our lives by the transformation power of God...

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

Those redeemed of the Kingdom of Christ will seek to live a lifestyle that gives honor to God...

Titus 2:11-12 (NIV) *For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,*

The Kingdom of God is can never be defeated...

Hebrews 12:28 (NIV) *Since we are receiving a Kingdom that is unshakable, let us be thankful and please God by worshiping him with holy fear and awe.*

In this present “evil age” (Galatians 1:4) believers long for the coming kingdom...

Matthew 5:10 *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

2 Timothy 3:12 *All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*

God’s Kingdom will one day be fully consummated in ultimate victory over evil...

Revelation 11:15 *Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”*

Zechariah 14:9 *And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be— “The LORD is one,” And His name one..*

Jesus spoke that entrance to His coming kingdom had begun in the lives of any individual who followed Him...

Mark 1:15 *The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.*

The Goodness of the Kingdom of God

Matthew 6:33

*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,
and all these things shall be added to you.*

Our lives can be measured by the things we pursue, those very thoughts, perceptions, and beliefs that we choose to value the most, which actually define us for who we really are!

As we pursue the Lord in faith and devotion we will experience His blessed life...

Psalms 31:19 *How abundant are the good things that you have stored up for those who fear you, that you bestow in the sight of all, on those who take refuge in you.*

Psalms 27:13-14 *I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.*

As so many strive in search for security in this life, we each have before us the trustworthy pathway to the promised provisions in God's Kingdom...

Life Lesson #1:

The Kingdom of God is the greatest of all pursuits to be realized before us each day, but this quest can only be fulfilled by the one who is diligent and undistracted.

Deuteronomy 4:29 *But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.*

Jeremiah 29:13 *You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*

Life Lesson #2:

The Kingdom of God is the wondrous discovery of all who humbly seek their Creator with a brokenness in spirit and willingness to turn (repent) from their sin, receiving His abundant forgiveness.

2 Chronicles 7:14 *If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*

Psalms 34:18 *The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit.*

Life Lesson #3:

As we live for His Kingdom, now and to come, we can enjoy the assurance of God's loving care and needful resources, even knowing that we will lack nothing of significance in our life today.

James 1:4 *But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*

1 John 5:14 *This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.*

Your Best Life Now, and In The Kingdom To Come

Reality is best explained through creation by our awesome Creator...

Genesis 1:1 *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

Psalms 19:1-3 *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.*

All people are created with significant and design, and matter to God...

Genesis 1:27-28 *So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them.*

Sin has brought about the condition of our fallen world, temporarily...

Romans 3:23; 6:23 *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God... For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

The God who has been revealed has proved Himself in time and history...

Romans 5:8 *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

Belief is the key to restoration and relationship with the Lord...

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

Isaiah 26:3 *You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.*

Seeking and trusting God is the only way to eternal success...

Jeremiah 29:11-13 *For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.*

Faith builds the unbreakable bond of love with our Maker...

Romans 8:38-39 *For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Our confidence and hope comes from Christ...

Philippians 4:13 *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

Colossians 1:27 *To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

Our future is unimaginably beautiful...

1 Corinthians 2:9 (NIV) *“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.”*

Revelation 21:1-4 *Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”*

We Were Created For Heaven

Psalm 16:11

*You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy;
At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

Three very important facts about heaven!

1. We were created for heaven:

Genesis 1:1; 26-27 *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...*

So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

God created mankind for relationship, and this is the essence of what heaven will finally be like.

- Through Jesus, we can know and experience that personal and intimate connection with God!
- Jesus promised that he would “*prepare a place*” for anyone who would simply put their faith/trust in him.

Yes, we were created for heaven!

2. Heaven is very different than earth:

Human history is the irrefutable testimony of our fallenness, the evidence of our universal sin nature, and all the tragedy and sorrow that has been the common lot of mankind will someday fade like a distant memory.

- Heaven will be life, like it was meant to be.
- Heaven will be beautiful beyond our most wondrous dreams.
- Heaven will make all the suffering and sadness of even this moment forgotten!

Revelation 21:3-4 *Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”*

**Yes, heaven will be so much better than anything
this has earth has to offer!**

Some very important reminders for now...

1 Corinthians 13:12 *For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.*

Ecclesiastes 3:11 *He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.*

3. Heaven is a place of absolute perfection

Most importantly, heaven is where our Creator God dwells in all His fulness.

2 Peter 3:13 *But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

1 Peter 1:3-4 (NIV) *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you.*

- His power and majesty are only partially witnessed in the creation all about us now, but, in heaven, His awesome holiness and beauty will be displayed thoroughly and completely.
- Nothing imperfect can be in heaven, and on our own self-righteousness we are unqualified and we would all be excluded from heaven.

So how do we resolve this cosmic dilemma?

- Jesus, the only perfect One, gave His life, dying for all who would place their faith in Him.
- As we each transfer our trust from self to Jesus, we are forgiven and redeemed.

John 14:6 Jesus proclaimed, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”*

Jesus promised that he would “*prepare a place*” for all who would put their faith and trust in Him...

John 14:1-3 *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 there 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.*

Matthew 11:28 *Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*

Our hope is not merely in these passing moments of this short earthly life, but our eternal dwelling in heaven...

Psalms 90:12 *Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.*

Psalms 39:4-7 *LORD, make me to know my end, and what is the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am. Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths, And my age is as nothing before You; Certainly every man at his best state is but vapor. Surely every man walks about like a shadow; Surely they busy themselves in vain; He heaps up riches, And does not know who will gather them. “And now, Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in You.*

The power and majesty of God will be witnessed in heaven...

1 Chronicles 29:11 *Yours, O LORD, is the greatness the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and You are exalted as head over all.*

Living Life With A Heavenly Perspective

Philippians 3:20

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

As we live life in this world we should be keenly aware that this place is not our home.

It is wisdom to develop an understanding of the brevity of life on this earth, living each day as a gift from God...

Psalm 39:5 *Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths, and my age is as nothing before You; Certainly every man at his best state is but vapor.*

Psalm 90:12 *So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.*

As we look forward towards heaven, and eternity with our Lord, we make daily decisions to let go of temporal pleasures...

Hebrews 11:25-26 (NIV) *He (Moses) chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.*

- All this world offers us nothing to compare to the joys of heaven!

It is most sobering to remember that we each will someday be weighed as to our faithfulness in this life...

Romans 14:10, 12 *For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ... So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.*

- There is a battle for the affections of every human heart, either we will love the Lord of all creation, or merely the temporal things of this earth.

Whatever a person values the most in this world reflects who they really are, and where they are going in eternity...

Matthew 6:19-21 (NIV) *Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

It is absolute truth that we were created to serve somebody, either the Lord who is worthy, or the vanity of oneself...

Matthew 6:24 *No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.*

Authentic life insight (aka, wisdom) applied is simply trusting the Lord for everything, for all else will lead to a dismal failure...

Proverbs 18:10-11 *The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe. A rich man's wealth is his strong city, and like a high wall in his imagination.*

Questions About Heaven

John 14:2

In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you.

Is Heaven a real place?

- The author of the book of Hebrews describes Heaven as *"a better country", "a city" "whose builder and maker is God"* (Hebrews 11:8-12).
- This suggests heaven is more than an abstract imaginary place, but occupies space and intelligent design, perhaps in a dimension unseen by our earthly eyes at this time?

Where is Heaven?

- The Bible speaks of those being *"caught up"* and taken to heaven.
- So we can conclude that heaven exists up beyond the earthly plane of space and time.

Acts 1:9-12 *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. (cf. John 14:2-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18)*

Will we have a body in heaven?

Jesus Christ will transform our earthly bodies through our own resurrection in the Rapture.

Philippians 3:20-21 *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 *Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

In Heaven we will have a new body that is akin to Jesus' resurrected body...

1 John 3:2-3 *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

How will my earthly life be assessed in Heaven?

- Paul writes to the Corinthians explaining that how we build our life through the choices we make daily are in preparation for our eternal home of heaven.

1 Corinthians 3:12-15 *Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*

- It's important to note that Paul stresses that the 'builder' (true believers) will be saved even if their "work" is burned up.

Will we recognize family and friends?

- Identity will be maintained, however it will be thoroughly redeemed and perfected.
- Remember that Moses and Elijah who appeared with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration.
- Even though they died centuries before, they still maintained a clear identity (Matthew 17:3-4). Moreover, Peter, James, and John somehow recognized them.

What does Heaven look like?

It's best to start with the Scripture that says, *"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."* (1 Cor. 2:9).

- We learn the streets are made with pure gold (Revelation 21:21) and God's presence, beauty and splendor is everywhere (Revelation 21:23).
- The foundation and walls are made of dazzling, unimaginable jewels (Revelation 21:10-21).

Will there be animals in heaven?

- From the beginning of creation, God had a purpose for animals in relationship to humans.
- While the Bible does not directly mention life after death for our pets, what Isaiah describes in the Millennial Kingdom provides us great insight regarding animals in the future.

Isaiah 11:6-9 *The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.*

- This kingdom account implies the peace of God and that animals will be around to be enjoyed.

Is there music in Heaven?

- The Bible has various accounts of heavenly song!

Revelation 14:2-3 *And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. They sang as it were a new song before the throne.*

- We take note that the angels announced to the shepherds the arrival of the Savior in song.

Luke 2:13-14 *And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"*

God Himself rejoices over us with singing...

Zephaniah 3:17 *The LORD your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.*

- Also, in Revelation 5:9-13 we see the church singing along with angels before Jesus!

Will we become angels?

- The Bible indicates that man's experience and design is different from angels.
- When Jesus says we will be like angels, not given in marriage, it is understood as a spiritual similarity (angels do not marry, or produce children).
- In Revelation 19:9-10, when John attempts to worship the angel, the angel strictly warns him, *"Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God!"*
- There is a clear distinction between angels and believers *"who hold the testimony of Jesus."*

How do we get to Heaven?

Simply believe the gospel and put your faith completely in Jesus!

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 *Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen...*

Romans 3:23; 6:23 *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God... For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Romans 10:9-10 (NIV) *If you declare (confess) with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.*

Heaven Is For Real!

Everything The Bible Says About Heaven

Matthew 6:9-10

*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

Heaven is the dwelling place of God...

Deuteronomy 26:15 *Look down from Your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel and the land which You have given us, just as You swore to our fathers, "a land flowing with milk and honey."*

Psalms 11:4 *The LORD is in His holy temple, The LORD's throne is in heaven;*

Heaven is also the dwelling place of God's angels who are also active here on this earth...

Luke 2:15 *So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us."*

Matthew 28:2 *And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door.*

Hebrews 12:22 *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels.*

Heaven is the dwelling place of God's saints from earth who have died and now live there in His presence...

John 14:2-3 (NIV) *My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?*

Revelation 7:9 (NIV) *After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.*

At death, the human spirit/soul leaves this earthly body and goes either of two destinations, Heaven or Hell (i.e., Hades)...

The Rich Man and Lazarus:

Luke 16:22, 25 (NIV) *The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried... But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony.'*

The Thief on the Cross was promised heaven...

Luke 23:43 (NIV) *Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."*

There is immediate and continuous conscious existence after death...

Philippians 1:22-23 (NIV) *If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far.*

There is no “soul sleep” or period of unawareness preceding heaven for all those believers in Christ...

2 Corinthians 5:8 *We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.*

- In 1 Thessalonians 4:13 “*fallen asleep*” is a euphemism for death, describing the spirit’s departure from the body, ending our conscious existence here on earth.

Heaven is an actual place from which Christ has come, and returned to...

John 1:14 (NIV) *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

John 6:33, 35 *For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world... And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life.”*

Heaven is an actual place from which Angels have come to minister on earth...

Hebrews 1:14 *Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?*

Psalms 91:11 *For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.*

Revelation 10:1 *Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven.*

Heaven is an actual place from which, in rare circumstances people, even without their physical death, have traveled to...

2 Kings 2:11 (NIV) *As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.*

2 Corinthians 12:2 *I know a man (i.e., Paul himself) in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven.*

Revelations 11:12 *And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them.*

Heaven is where Christ came from...

John 6:38 *For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.*

1 Timothy 1:15 (NIV) *Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners —of whom I am the worst.*

Heaven is where Jesus returned to after His Resurrection...

Acts 1:11 *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 (cf. Revelation 19:11-16).*

After the seven year Great Tribulation Jesus will return from Heaven to earth...

Matthew 24:30 *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.*

Heaven contains for believers a permanent inheritance, an estate that will not perish, specifically reserved for us...

1 Peter 1:3-4 (NIV) *In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you.*

Heaven is the Christian's actual home country of their citizenship...

Philippians 3:20 *But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.*

Hebrews 11:16 (NIV) *Instead, they were longing for a better country — a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.*

Heaven is often referred to in the Bible as specific location...

- We do not know whether it is a place “in the heavens” (i.e., the universe beyond the earth) or entirely outside the space/time continuum.
- Heaven may be a reality in another dimension.
- We know heaven is for real, and presently that place isn't earth!

Christ is our King and we are his ambassadors of grace, inviting others to join us in His coming Kingdom of Heaven...

2 Corinthians 5:20 *Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.*

- As we are faithful servants for Christ we identify and plan our lives with a focus on our home country, Heaven!
- Should we become too engrossed in an alien land (aka, this world) where we temporarily reside, we can easily compromise our allegiances to our true King and country.

While on our brief stay here on earth we realize that we are not home yet...

Hebrews 11:13 (NIV) *All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.*

God's people should long for heaven...

This pleases our Lord, who has prepared a place there for us!

2 Corinthians 5:1-2 (NIV) *For we know that if the earthly tent (i.e., physical body) we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling.*

- The pain we may go through in this life is merely a reminder that we are not home yet, thus giving us a powerful hope for where we are going.

1 John 2:15-17 *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*

We should be ever-motivated to live godly lives by the anticipation of Heaven...

Philippians 3:13-14 (NIV) *Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

- We have everything to look forward to when we know Heaven awaits us!

2 Timothy 4:8 *Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

- As we grow in our longing for Heaven we find victory over those things that so often weigh heavy on this earth.

Heaven, and all that it represents, should be a central object of our attention while we live this earthly life...

Colossians 3:1-4 (NIV) *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

1 Corinthians 2:9 *Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."*

- Our hearts and minds are to be continuously set on these “*things above*” where Christ is in heaven, not on “*earthly things*.”

The popular notion of Christians being “so heavenly minded that they are of no earthly good” is a modern myth...

- On the contrary, most people in today’s world are often so earthly minded that they are of no heavenly or earthly good!
- C. S. Lewis said, “It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this one.”
- God commands us to be heavenly minded, and doing so will give us the perspective and motivation to live each day on earth faithfully doing His will.

There is a genuine sense in which believers are currently in heaven with Christ...

Ephesians 2:6-7 *And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.*

- Our intimate connection with Christ in his redemptive work among humanity makes us inseparable from him in the spirit.
- As we walk with him and commune with him in this world, this reality makes it possible to experience a foretaste of heaven’s delights and wonders.

Philippians 3:13-14 *Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

Because of our assurance of our destiny in Heaven we should live each day inspired with eternity in mind...

Ecclesiastes 3:11 *He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.*

Heaven will provide us deliverance from the present conditions of material decay and corruption...

Matthew 6:20-21 *Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

2 Corinthians 5:1-2 *For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven.*

- The entropy (i.e., decline) of this life on earth is both physical and spiritual.
- We have a choice, we can either invest in the Kingdom of Heaven, or the ambitions and things of this brief life journey.

Heaven will deliver us from our current fallen and sinful human condition...

Romans 7:24 *What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

The redeemed in Heaven are described as “*shining*” and wearing “*white robes*” indicating their moral purity and righteousness...

Daniel 12:3 (NIV) *Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.*

Matthew 13:43 *Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*

Heaven is a place of great joy for the redeemed...

Psalms 16:11 *You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

Revelation 21:3-4 *God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”*

The names of Christ’s redeemed are written and reserved in Heaven...

Luke 10:20 *Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.*

Hebrews 12:23 (NIV) *You have come to the assembly of God’s firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God himself, who is the judge over all things. You have come to the spirits of the righteous ones in heaven who have now been made perfect.*

Heaven’s most significant draw is our wonderful anticipation of being with Christ...

Philippians 1:21-23 *For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.*

1 John 3:2-3 (NIV) *Dear friends, we are already God’s children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is. And all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure.*

The promise of a bodily Resurrection is a great motivation to live for Christ today...

Philippians 3:20-21 *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body.*

When in His presence, Christ will give new names to those saved by faith and they will finally enjoy their victory...

Revelation 2:17 (NIV) *Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.*

Another draw of heaven is our anticipation of ultimate reunion with Christian loved ones who've gone before us...

1 Thessalonians 4:14-15 (NIV) *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 every believer who has ever walked on this earth there is that confident expectation that someday we will be rejoicing before the Lord in Heaven together!

Those who deny Jesus in this present life will be excluded from eternal life in Heaven...

Galatians 5:19-21 (NIV) *The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

Ephesians 5:5 (NIV) *For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person— such a person is an idolater —has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*

There are 5 distinct phases of Heaven that are identifiable throughout the Bible:

1. There was a pre-sin (fall of mankind) Heaven, before the rebellion of Satan...

Isaiah 14:12-15 *How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation, on the farthest sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit.*

Apparently a third of the angels joined in with Satan as he revolted against God...

Revelation 12:4 *His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.*

2. There was the Old Testament Paradise/Abraham's bosom, the abode of the righteous after death...

Luke 16:22 (NIV) *So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.*

- At that time there were two compartments of Hades, the place of the dead.
- One side was Paradise, a pre-Heaven, and the other part being left of Hades was a pre-Hell location of judgment.

3. Now is the current post-resurrection of Christ reality of Heaven...

2 Corinthians 5:8 *We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord* (cf. Philippians 1:21-26).

- Those in Paradise were relocated to where believers now come directly into the Lord's presence at death, heaven.

4. The Millennial Kingdom, where Christ rules and reigns over the earth with His redeemed, is a phase of Heaven...

Daniel 7:27 *Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.*

5. Then there is the Heaven still to come after the final judgment, this is call the New Heavens and New Earth...

Revelation 21:1-2 *Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.*

Heaven is not yet as it one day will be...

Revelation 21:3-4 *And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."*

- There is still sin and suffering in our world which will not be relieved until after the present heaven and earth are transformed.

Heaven reveals an actual sanctuary of God which served as the pattern for the earthly tabernacle/temple...

Hebrews 9:24 *For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.*

- The wilderness Tabernacle of Moses, as well as in Jerusalem Temple built under Solomon, were both based upon the Temple in Heaven!

Hebrews 8:1-2 *We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.*

In Heaven this temple contains the prototype ark of the covenant, and it's a more tangible reality than we imagine...

Revelation 11:19; 15:5 (NIV) *Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant... After this I looked, and I saw in heaven the temple —that is, the tabernacle of the covenant law —and it was opened.*

- Much of the significant items of both the tabernacle of Moses, as well as the temple of Solomon, are merely representative of what is in Heaven.

Jesus described Heaven as having many rooms or dwellings, promising that he himself would go there and prepare a place there for us...

John 14:2-3 (NIV) *My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there 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.*

- All that we need for life eternal with the Lord is being made ready now in Heaven!
- We have the promise of Jesus that He will someday return to bring His church to their true home, Heaven.

Some believers will receive beautiful welcome when they enter heaven...

2 Peter 1:10-11 *Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

- As we serve the Lord faithfully in our life here in this present age we will be rewarded in Heaven.

1 Peter 1:7 (NIV) *These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire —may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

Christ's resurrection body is the prototype for our own heavenly bodies...

- After his resurrection, Jesus emphasized he was not a "ghost," a disembodied spirit, but had a physical body (Luke 24:37-39).

1 John 3:2 (NIV) *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*

Philippians 3:20-21 *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*

Our resurrected ‘body’ will have real “spiritual” form with physical substance...

1 Corinthians 15:42-44 (NIV) *So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.*

We will be capable of talking, walking, touching and being touched by others in our heavenly, resurrected bodies ...

Luke 24:39 *“Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.”.*

- Christ’s resurrection body had an ability to appear suddenly, apparently coming through a locked door to the apostles (John 20:19) and “disappearing” from the sight of the two at Emmaus (Luke 24:31).
- If our resurrection bodies have the same properties as his, this suggests an ability to transcend the present laws of physics and to move/travel in some way we are now incapable of.

Christ ate food in His resurrection body, so we too will be able to eat in Heaven...

Luke 24:40-42 *When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, “Have you any food here?” So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence.*

Luke 14:15 (NIV) *When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, “Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.*

- There will be no hunger or thirst in Heaven!
- Our resurrection body does not need what is now essential—food, drink, oxygen, etc.
- Nonetheless, we will be fully capable of enjoying some or all of these essential life needs in Heaven.

Between our own resurrection, and entrance to heaven, those believers who die must have a tangible (though temporary) intermediate pre-resurrection body...

- This fits the notion that unlike God and the angels, who are in essence spirit, and though capable of inhabiting bodies (John 4:24; Hebrews 1:14), man is fundamentally spiritual and physical.

Genesis 2:7 *Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.*

At death the believer is ushered into heaven by God’s holy angels...

Psalms 91:11 *For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.*

- The Bible identifies ministering angels (Hebrews 1:14) who have served us while we were on earth.

- The Parable of The Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) reveals what these angels actually do upon the death of a believer.

Some class called ‘guardian’ angels are assigned to children, and they have special continuous access to God...

Matthew 18:10 (NIV) *See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.*

- This passage suggests that ministering or guardian angels could be assigned to people even prior to their conversion to Christ, though this is not explicitly taught in the scriptures.

When we depart this earthly life, our temporary, intermediate body retains human qualities in heaven until our own resurrection...

1 Corinthians 15:50-57 (NIV) *I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 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. For 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.*

In Heaven, we will worship God along with the angels and redeemed people from throughout every age...

Revelation 5:11-12 *Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they were saying: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”*

- The saints, angels, and God will be interacting together in heaven, building and deepening our relationship with each other.
- When the believers from throughout the ages gather we will see Jesus in all His glory and then we will bow before the throne of God in Heaven!

Our comprehension of reality will be fully enlightened when before the Lord...

1 Corinthians 13:12 *For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.*

2 Corinthians 3:18 *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

In Heaven we will exercise not only intellect but the deepest of emotions...

Revelation 6:10 (NIV) *They cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"*

We will join with the angels in Heaven in giving God praise...

Revelation 7:11-12 (NIV) *All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"*

Heaven is described as a place where there is great rejoicing over what God is accomplishing on earth...

Luke 15:10 *In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.*

Heaven is also a place from which God will bring forth His wrath against godlessness on earth...

Romans 1:18 *The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness.*

Romans 2:5 *But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.*

In Heaven, saints gain an increased sense of the holiness of God and a longing for His justice...

Revelation 6:9-10 *When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood.*

The faithful angels in Heaven also anticipate God's judgment to be exercised against the ungodly...

Revelation 16:4-7 *Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters saying: "You are righteous, O Lord, The One who is and who was and who is to be, Because You have judged these things. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, And You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due." And I heard another from the altar saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.".*

In Heaven, we will have eternal rewards, including permanent possessions and positions which vary from believer to believer...

Luke 12:48 *For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.*

- Rewards will be granted in light of our faithfulness and motives.

1 Corinthians 4:2; 5 (NIV) *Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful... Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.*

In dispensing rewards, Christ will not overlook the smallest act of kindness done in his name...

Mark 9:41 *Truly I tell you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not lose their reward.*

What man may not see as meaningful in this brief life, may actually be very significant in the kingdom of heaven to come...

Matthew 6:19-21 (NIV) *Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

The greatest investment we can make is the pursuit of what really matters most...

2 Corinthians 5:10 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

Knowing that we are accountable before the Lord should motivate us to do good...

1 Corinthians 3:11-14 *For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.*

- God truly knows our heart's intention and whatever we do this side of eternity will only have lasting effectiveness if it is to His glory, not ours.

There are various crowns given to believers as heavenly rewards...

- The crown of life (James 1:12; Revelation 2:10)
- The imperishable crown (1 Corinthians 9:24-25)
- The crown of rejoicing (1 Thess. 2:19; Phil. 4:1)
- The crown of glory (1 Peter 5:1-4)

2 Timothy 4:7-8 *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

These crowns may relate to positions of ruling in Heaven...

Revelation 2:26-28 (NIV) *To all who are victorious, who obey me to the very end, to them I will give authority over all the nations.*

- These are lasting reminders of our work on earth, and Christ's faithfulness in enabling us to do that work, to His glory.

Ultimately, our crowns are humbly placed at Christ's feet...

Revelation 4:10 (NIV) *They lay their crowns before the throne and say: "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."*

- Our rewards are given for God's honor and glory, not ours.
- However, Scripture sees that is no contradiction whatsoever between God's eternal glory and our eternal good!

While Heaven will be wonderful for all its inhabitants, not every believer's position and experience in Heaven will be the same...

- As hell has different levels of punishments (see Matthew 11:20-24; Luke 20:45-47), so heaven has different degrees of rewards.

Matthew 11:24 *But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.*

Luke 20:45-47 *While all the people were listening, Jesus said to his disciples, "Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely."*

- Heaven should be looked to by the believer as the time when all righteous acts, many of which will have been unnoticed and disregarded by many, and some even punished on earth, will be finally rewarded.

There is a "proper time" for the harvest, a time that follows our life on earth, and this is the Heaven that awaits us...

Galatians 6:9 (NIV) *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*

The Christian's good works, done for God's glory in this life, will have eternal significance and rewards...

Revelation 14:13 *Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'" "Yes," says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."*

- The "rest" granted us by Christ on this earth is paradoxically, a rest we now must "make every effort to enter" (Hebrews 4:11).

Matthew 11:28-29 *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*

Heaven’s labor will be most refreshing and unthwarted, without futility and frustration...

- It will be like what Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:15), before sin brought the curse on the ground with its thorns.

Genesis 3:17-19 *“Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; For dust you are, and to dust you shall return.”*

In Heaven, we will serve God as we reign with King Jesus, just as we will throughout His Millennial Kingdom...

Revelation 5:10 *You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.*

Revelation 22:3 (NIV) *No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.*

- Service implies responsibilities, duties, effort, and creativity to do work well.
- Labor with lasting accomplishment, unhindered by decay and fatigue, and enhanced by the unlimited resources of God.

In accord with our service for Christ, while on earth during His Millennial Kingdom, we will reign with Him in Heaven...

Revelation 22:5 *There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.*

We will have responsibilities for those under our leadership during this earthly Kingdom, and beyond...

Luke 19:17 (NIV) *Well done! the king exclaimed. ‘You are a good servant. You have been faithful with the little I entrusted to you, so you will be governor of ten cities as your reward.*

Revelation 5:10 (NIV) *You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.”*

Believers will even rule over the angels in the coming future...

1 Corinthians 6:2-3 *Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?*

The central part of the eternal Heaven will be the city of the New Jerusalem...

- The exact dimensions of the heavenly city are measured by an angel and reported as 12,000 stadia (1500 miles) cube (Revelation 22:15-17).
- This base of over two million square miles would stretch from the west coast to the Mississippi river, and from the borders of Canada to Mexico, covering two thirds the entire land mass of the United States.
- More astounding is its 1500 mile height! By present standards, that would be over 780,000 stories.
- It is apparently within this vast city that we will have personal dwelling places, which Jesus has prepared for us

Revelation 21:2-4 *Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."*

Heaven's New Jerusalem is filled with beauty and wonder, including streets of gold and buildings of pearls, emeralds and precious stones...

Revelation 21:19-21 *The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones... The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.*

Heaven has light, water, trees and fruit...

Revelation 22:1-2 *And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

The gates of the heavenly city of New Jerusalem are always open for travelers in and out...

Revelation 22:14 *Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.*

Revelation 21:24-25 (NIV) *The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there.*

- Travel outside the city suggests the city is not the whole of heaven, but merely its center or home base.

Heaven will contain some animals...

Isaiah 65:25 *The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, and dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain," says the LORD.*

- Note: Even before the Millennium, there are horses in heaven (Revelation 6:2-8; 19:11), enough for all the armies of heaven to ride at Christ Second coming return (Revelation 19:11; 2 Kings 6:17).

In Heaven, we'll eat and drink...

We will join with others at the table with Christ and the redeemed saints from earth, communicating, fellowshiping, and rejoicing with them.

Matthew 8:10-11 *When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.*

In Heaven we will dwell with God and "the former things" of this current fallen world will be a distant, faded memory...

Revelation 21:1-4 *Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."*

The Bible's Most Important Messianic Prophecies

Acts 28:23 (NIV)

He (Paul) witnessed to them from morning till evening, explaining about the kingdom of God, and from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus.

The essence of Bible prophecy is regarding the promised Messiah, Savior and King, who would restore humankind with Almighty God...

Revelation 19:10 *I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*

The promise of a Messiah who would come and defeat our enemy, Satan...

Genesis 3:15 *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.*

- This is the Bible's very first Messianic prophecy.
- These prophetic words of his ultimate defeat were spoken by God to Satan after he had tempted Adam and Eve to sin against Him.

This is a remarkable foretelling of God's unfathomable grace...

- Despite their rebellion, God reveals that He will provide a way of reconciliation with Him through the seed of woman, referring to the Messiah who would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14).
- He states that Satan will “*strike*” the Messiah on “*his heel*” (a non-lethal wound represented by the Cross that it was overcome through the Resurrection.)
- He further states that the Messiah will “*crush*” Satan's “*head*” (the lethal wound at the Messiah's Second Coming when Satan will be bound and ultimately cast into the Lake of Fire at the end of the Messiah's Millennial reign.)

The promised lineage of the Messiah...

Genesis 12:1-3 *Now the LORD had said to Abram:*

“Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

- In this prophecy, God unveils the future lineage of the Messiah.
- He will come from the descendants of Abraham, the Jewish people and nation of Israel.

The Messiah will prove to be a blessing to all the world, and not just the Jewish people through whom He will be revealed...

- And because the Messiah will be of Jewish ancestry, God will honor the Jewish people by making them a great nation and protecting them throughout the ages to come, blessing those who bless them and cursing those who curse them.

Genesis 15:5-6 *Then He brought him (Abraham) outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.*

Birth and Nature of the Messiah...

Micah 5:2 *But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.*

- This prophecy of the prophet Micah was written 700 years before the birth of Jesus, yet it precisely identifies the very town where the Messiah would be born!
- There were two Bethlehems in Judah at the time of the Messiah's birth. One was in the north near the Sea of Galilee. The other was located near Jerusalem in the region of Ephrathah, and this was the one foretold.
- This prophecy proclaims that the Messiah will be an eternal being, indicating that He would be God in the flesh.

The Timing of the Messiah's Coming...

Daniel 9:24-26 *"Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined.*

- This is the "70 Weeks" prophecy of Daniel and it foretells that during a period of 70 weeks of years, or 490 years.
- According to this prophecy God is going to accomplish six purposes among the Jewish people (see Daniel 9:24)
- At the end of 69 of those weeks, or 483 years, the Messiah will come and "be cut off" followed by the destruction of the city of Jerusalem (which occurred in 70 AD).

This is a prophecy that clearly revealed the season of the First Coming...

- Since the six foretold facts regarding the Jewish people have not yet been accomplished there must be a future fulfillment.
- The last seven years will be completed during the 7 year period of the Great Tribulation when God consummates all His promises to Israel.
(see Jeremiah 30:7 *"the time of Jacob's trouble"*).

The Nature of the Messiah's Ministry...

Isaiah 61:1-2 *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners; to proclaim the favorable year of the LORD.*

- This is a prophecy about the nature of the Messiah's ministry at His First Coming.
- He would bring "good news" (i.e., the Gospel) to all of humanity of reconciliation with God, by providing liberation from the bondage of sin, bringing hope and joy to the brokenhearted.

The Suffering of the Messiah was foretold...

Isaiah 53:3-5, 7, 9 *He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked— but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth.*

This prophecy precisely describes the suffering that Jesus experienced...

- Isaiah 53 is not considered by Jewish Rabbis in their teaching because it obviously is regarding Christ in His first coming.
- This is the passage that Philip used to convert the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39).

The Messiah's Death...

Psalms 22:16 *They pierced My hands and My feet.*

Psalms 22 describes the crucifixion of the Messiah, and the terrible physical, mental and spiritual suffering He would endure on the Cross.

- David wrote this Psalm 1,000 years before the birth of Jesus. At that time, there was only one way of executing someone under Jewish law, and that was by stoning.
- Crucifixion was not used as a form of capital punishment until centuries after this prophecy was given.
- A thousand years later, that was still the case, but at the time of Jesus, the nation of Israel was under Roman rule, and the Jews no longer had the power of execution.
- They were required to get Roman permission, and the Romans executed by means of public crucifixion.

The Messiah's Resurrection...

Luke 9:21-22 (NIV) *He (Jesus) answered them, and instructed them not to tell this to anyone, saying, 'The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.'*

- This prophecy of Jesus about His death and Resurrection was presented to His disciples several times in the other Gospels (Matthew 16:21; Mark 8:31).
- The prophesied Resurrection of Messiah is also referred to in Psalm 16:10 where David wrote: You (God) will not allow Your Holy One (Messiah) to undergo decay.

How To Be Prepared For Eternity

2 Corinthians 13:5

Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith.

Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

A true believer lives a pattern of life which is conformed, over time, to what God has revealed to us about His nature and will, and this transformation will be evident by:

Walking in the light...

1 John 1:5-7 (NIV) *This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

Living a life that is marked by sensitivity to sin, confession, and repentance...

1 John 1:8-10 (NIV) *If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.*

Seeking to keep God's commands...

1 John 2:3-4 (NIV) *We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. Whoever says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person.*

- When we desire to know God's will, we will strive to obey it, and mourn our disobedience. These are actions of true faith!

**True believers remain faithful in the most dire
and stressful situations of this life.**

This can be seen as they:

Walk as Christ walked...

1 John 2:5-6 (NIV) *But those who obey God's word truly show how completely they love him. That is how we know we are living in him. Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did.*

- We should desire to imitate Christ and grow in His grace!

Love their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ...

1 John 2:9-10 *Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness. Anyone who loves their brother and sister lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble.*

- We should desire the fellowship of the family of God and seek to serve each other in deed and truth.

Have an increasing scorn for the things of this fallen world...

1 John 2:15-17 *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever*

- As believers we should reject all that contradicts and opposes God's will.
- All those who claim to be Jesus' disciples will faithfully live their life by honoring Him daily.

Hebrews 12:14 *Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.*

**A true believer seeks to live the way of peace with all,
truly desiring to be obedient to the Lord,
and this is evident by:**

Remaining faithful in fellowship...

1 John 2:18-19 (NIV) *This is how we know it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.*

- Our test of faith is clearly experienced by the love we exhibit for our brothers and sisters in Christ!

A persistent longing for the return of our beloved Savior...

1 John 3:2-3 *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

Our “blessed hope” is living each day faithfully, with a longing to be with Jesus...

Titus 2:11-14 *For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the 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 wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.*

Professing Christ to be God in the flesh...

1 John 4:1-4 *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God.*

- The wisdom of this age is found solely in the truth of knowing Jesus!

A true believer pursues a lifestyle of practical faith and daily drawing near to the Lord, and this is evident by:

Personal actions of righteousness...

1 John 3:7 *Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.*

- We should be doing those things that conform to God's righteous standard and commands.

Overcoming the world...

1 John 5:4-5 (NIV) *For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.*

- Although we are often hard pressed and weary, we forward in faith, knowing our ultimate victory is firm and sure. We continue following Christ and do not turn back!

Believing we have eternal life in Jesus...

1 John 5:11-13 *And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.*

Our Future Is Promised and Secure

Romans 8:28

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

We all live in a world of much uncertainty, and the future so often may appear overwhelming, but God is still in control...

Jeremiah 29:11 *For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

As the events of life unfold before our eyes we naturally long for wisdom that will give us hope, but only Bible prophecy makes certain our future is secure!

Isaiah 46:10 (NIV) *I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, 'My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.'*

The anchor for our soul, as we face these days to come, is found in the confidence we receive through trusting the One who is already there...

Hebrews 6:18-19 (NIV) *God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.*

Life is the best teacher, and personal experience has proven that we truly live in a fallen world, but through faith we can overcome...

Romans 12:2 *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

The promise of peace and love, in the midst of the many storms of this life, is the gift Jesus brings to those who receive His redemption...

John 16:33 *These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*

John 1:12 *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

The strength of the Lord is gained through the seeking heart of those who humble themselves before their Maker who they truly love...

Matthew 22:36-37 *Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.*

As we choose to pursue a life of obedience, loving the Lord unreservedly, will also develop the strong desire to courageously love others...

Matthew 22:38-40 *This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.*

True believers we can live each day with the precious promises of the glory of heaven that awaits them...

1 Corinthians 2:9 *Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.*

God has designed our life now, and in the future, for abundant eternal purpose...

Ephesians 1:9-10 (NIV) *He made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment, to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.*

Ephesians 2:10 *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

God has plans for us that may seem beyond our mere comprehension...

Genesis 12:1-3 (NIV) *The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you."*

- When Abram received this word from the Lord there was no way he could fully comprehend how it could be fulfilled, but he believed and in time all came to pass, as foretold.

We live within the human limitations of this present life, but will someday see reality with a more completeness and understanding...

Ecclesiastes 3:11 *He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.*

The promises of God for those who trust Him reveal blessings that are more than what we could imagine...

Ephesians 3:20 *Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.*

The fulfillment of God's desire to bless us is contingent upon our spiritual hunger and obedience to him...

Deuteronomy 5:29 *Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever!*

As children of the Lord we should not plan our future as evil people do...

Jeremiah 10:2-3 (NIV) *This is what the LORD says: "Do not act like the other nations, who try to read their future in the stars. Do not be afraid of their predictions, even though other nations are terrified by them. Their ways are futile and foolish. They cut down a tree, and a craftsman carves an idol."*

God gives us a secure hope for our future...

Jeremiah 31:17 *"There is hope for your future," says the LORD. "Your children will come again to their own land."*

Romans 15:13 (NIV) *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.*

How To Live Confidently In A Fallen World

Psalm 118:8-9

*It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.
It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.*

Our confidence in this world is directly related to our faith in the Lord who alone is worthy, and not on the reliance of the systems of men!

Personal faith “in Christ” brings forth a strong God-confidence that overcomes the errors of our past...

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

- As we mature in our faith we naturally grow in both courage and wisdom.

Biblical humility reflects an honest self-assessment, which leads to a confidence and complete reliance on Lord, not on oneself...

James 4:10 *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.*

- The more we trust the Lord, the more we gain in the knowledge of His power and will for our lives.

Through awesome reverence for the Lord we gain an abundance of confidence and stability throughout our life...

Proverbs 14:26 *In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, and His children will have a place of refuge.*

- Through the “fear of the Lord” we receive His grace filled security.

As we personally experience the Lord’s sufficient grace for every circumstance, His strength is fully realized...

2 Corinthians 12:9 *And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

It is God’s desire that we come to Him “boldly” with a full confidence to intervene in our lives on our behalf with what is best!

The power and confidence of God can only come through the abandoning of self-confidence...

1 Corinthians 2:3-5 *I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*

In order to endure in doing the Lord’s will, we must be conscious to not revert or retreat back to mere self-confidence...

Hebrews 10:35-36 *Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.*

With our confidence in God, there comes the gifts of His strength, courage and fearlessness...

Joshua 1:9 *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.*

We can rest with confidence that the Lord will daily carry us to His ultimate victory in Heaven...

Philippians 1:6 *Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.*

- God gives us the gift of being confident in Him, and the promise that His presence will guide us throughout our life.

There many varieties of fear that we face in our life here on this earth, but only the fear of the Lord builds confidence...

Hebrews 4:16 *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

With God's strength, and according to His will, we can confidently accomplish any worthy thing...

Philippians 4:13 *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

God fully provides for us what is required to overcome, even gaining victory over all our fears...

2 Timothy 1:7 *For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*

God-confidence means knowing Him intimately and this will lead us in conquering the fear of man...

Hebrews 13:6 *So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"*

Because the Lord is with us we can rest assured that we will overcome all...

Isaiah 41:10 *Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'*

In the midst of our distress we can discover the glorious truth that our Lord is faithful, and in His presence we will experience His peace...

Psalms 118:6 *The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?*

Philippians 4:6-7 *Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Epilogue: The Church That Is Ready For The Rapture

Those Who Truly Are Rapture Ready...

Live with a daily desire to know and obey the Lord,
while passionately seeking to honor Him in their life journey!

They seriously study their Bible and seek to obey what it says!

2 Timothy 2:15 *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

2 Timothy 3:16-17 *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

They are people of sincere prayer, filled with the Holy Spirit and guided by His divine wisdom...

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 *Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

James 1:5 *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.*

They faithfully fellowship with other like minded saints, not forsaking their church family...

Hebrews 10:23-25 *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*

They seek to serve the Lord among those in this world as a testimony to Him who is worthy...

Joshua 24:15 *Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."*

1 Peter 4:10-11 *As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

They examine themselves as to whether they are authentic believers who are truly following Jesus...

2 Corinthians 13:5 *Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?— unless indeed you fail to meet the test!*

The primary evidence of the authentic NT church is revealed through their practice of the interactive “one another” admonitions...

- This is the Lord’s ‘blueprint’ for His church today.
- The Bible speaks of all true believers being ‘brothers and sisters’ who are loving one another, and living and serving together in Jesus name.
- Our heartfelt prayer is that we, as His ‘Rapture Ready’ church, live this truth out in such a way that the world about us takes notice, and would be drawn to our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Biblically, the primary visible sign of the authentic church of Jesus is love for one another...

John 13:34-35 (NIV) *A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*

As believers we should seek to build up each...

1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NIV) *Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.*

Our love is evidenced as we serve one another...

Galatians 5:13 *You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.*

Christians should be devoted to one another...

Romans 12:10-13 *Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.*

We need to be mindful that we are accountable to one another...

Ephesians 5:21 *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

Being The Church Ready For The Rapture!

Each individual believer is designed for ministry and this is accomplished as we proactively apply these ‘one another’ admonitions to our daily life:

- Authentic ministry is primarily relationship-drive.
- The NT church is not about committees, group activities, music, etc.
- A 'Rapture Ready' church is a fellowship that serves the needs of others, and not merely themselves.

The most visible sign of the last days church is that it reflects the truth of Jesus Christ through the reality of His love...

- Unfortunately, in much of today's church, brotherly love among 'believers' has been subtly replaced by a multitude of church events and meetings, entertaining worship, and a myriad of programs.
- It is time to come back to the simplicity of our faith in Jesus, and be the church as it was meant to be!

A Biblical Church Family Lives For The Edification Of Each Other!

Be patient with one another: Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13

Be interested in one another: Philippians 2:4

Confess to one another: James 5:16

Live in harmony with one another: Romans 12:16

Do not be conceited to one another: Romans 13:8

Do not pass judgment to one another: Romans 14:13; 15:7

Do not slander one another: James 4:11

Instruct one another: Romans 16:16

Greet one another: Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 2 Corinthians 13:12

Admonish one another: Romans 5:14; Col. 3:16

Be humble to one another: Ephesians 4:2

Do not anger one another: Galatians 5:26

Do not lie to one another: Colossians 3:9

Do not grumble to one another: James 5:9

Give preference to one another: Romans 12:10

Be at peace with one another: Romans 12:18

Be of the same mind to one another: Romans 12:16; 15:5

Comfort one another: 1 Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11

Live in peace with one another: 1 Thessalonians 5:13