

I have not done a prophecy update for a while. So I want to start with what I'm going to call a quick **prophecy speculation report**. I say speculation because most of what we have covered in terms of specifics has been repeated many times now. But there are some developments which might give us some things to consider.

1. During the tribulation one of the judgments (fifth trumpet judgment) of God upon a Christ-rejecting and sinful world (in order to draw people to repentance) is described as *locusts* (that) *looked like horses armored for battle. They had what looked like golden crowns on their heads, and their faces looked like men's. ⁸ Their hair was long like women's, and their teeth were those of lions. ⁹ They wore breastplates that seemed to be of iron, and their wings roared like an army of chariots rushing into battle. ¹⁰ They had stinging tails like scorpions, and their power to hurt, given to them for five months, was in their tails* (Rev. 9:7-10). As you can gain from the text, we really don't know what this is. But in light of new technology there is a possibility these could be drones of some type. Maybe even a mixture of the natural with the technological. Or they could simply be demonic and never seen before. We don't know.
2. Several times in the book of [Rev.](#) we hear of individuals and armies coming and even fighting on horses ([Rev. 9:16-17, 19:17-21](#)). We have not known if this is simply the best John could describe because machines didn't really exist when he had received this vision from heaven. Or could it be with the advancement of AI, supercomputing, and robotics that one day mankind might willfully plunge himself into the dark ages in order to survive, using something like an EMP or kill switch? Yet it seems hard to imagine how birds could eat machines, unless the birds themselves are machines. That doesn't seem likely. We simply don't know. But the time for such decisions appears to be within the next few years.
3. We know [Damascus](#) is going to be utterly wiped out in one day ([Isa. 17:1-3](#)). Turkey is currently moving into Syria militarily. And because Turkey has made clear their desire is to kill every last Jew and take the land of Israel, Israel has vowed they will not let them get a foothold in Syria. And in case you missed it, Israel is on an expedited time clock to be 100% independent from the USA in terms of munitions. So far their technology is proving to be incredible. If they are not already able to destroy Damascus in one day, they will be soon. But is that how Damascus will be destroyed, or will someone else, or even God, do it? We simply don't know.
4. We know our nation is currently at war with [Iran](#). Yet Iran is prophesied to make an alliance with Russia and other nations to come against Israel in the last days ([Ezek. 38:1-39:16](#)). Does this mean we will not be able to eradicate the IRGC and radical factions of Islam in Iran? Or is it that the nation might have already tipped to the point where there are more Christians than Muslims, meaning after the rapture only the jihadist instructed Muslims and atheists will be left in Iran? Leaving such with weapons at their disposal. But you guessed it, we simply do not know. **We do know what will happen, but some of the specifics are simply given to the realm of speculation, until after it happens.**

So what is the point? I'm so glad you asked. What I have witnessed is a lot of Christians who have a disproportionate interest in prophecy. Now do catch that I didn't say it's wrong to have an interest in prophecy. Actually, **it's misguided to not have an interest in 27% of the Bible**. Because that's how much is prophecy (some fulfilled while others ready to be fulfilled at any time). But **what is the purpose of prophecy?** There are a few for sure.

1. To display God's unmatched power (omnipotence), knowledge (omniscience), and existence outside of time (omnipresence). And nothing and no one else is even close in being able to duplicate what God has given us in the Bible. (over 1,800 prophecies with 75-80% already having been fulfilled).
2. For our advantage so we can gauge what season we are in, in terms of the dispensations of God ([Matt. 16:1-3, Luke 19:41-44](#)) (if you don't know what dispensation means, we will be getting into that more in this series).

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3. But here is the piece of what prophecy is to bring to us that I want to focus our attention on. And that's how the fulfillment of each of these prophecies is to be drawing our hearts to heaven. Think about that for a minute. If you believe in the rapture of the church (because you have the correct view) 😊, **why does that excite you?** Asked another way, where will you be going if you are raptured? Wouldn't the very clear answer be **heaven**? But to be straightforward, I think there are many who love prophecy but are not all that excited about heaven. Or at least when they are laser focused on prophecy, their reason for doing so might not be motivated by trying to see how close we are to being taken to be with God forever. And folks, that's a swing and a miss! Prophecy is like the dish the meal is served on. Don't let the dish be your main focus. Set your mind on the meal it's carrying. And remember prophecy delivers to us the good news of our going home to heaven to be with God forever.

So why are we doing a series on heaven? Well, I think the call of **Col. 3:1-4** provides one great reason, saying, *"If then you were raised with Christ* (because you have received Him as your Savior through placing your faith in Jesus), *seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God* (do catch the reason for focusing on heaven is because the fullness of God is there). *Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died* (your old self before being born again), *and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*" Do you know you have to go to heaven with Him in order to return with Him in glory (**1 Thes. 3:13, 4:14**)? Think about that. So what is this talking about? We will cover it in depth in this series. But for now, I think we can agree this is a call for us to set our minds on heaven, where God is.

- But so you know this is not a one-off, let's look at **Matt. 6:20-21** where Jesus instructs us, *"lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."* Where is your heart's desire found? Is it in heaven?
- And we recently read through **Heb. 11:16** in which we were told of the saints of old, *"they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them."* Are you looking at prophecy because you are so excited that the time might be drawing near when the Lord calls us up to this place He has been preparing for us to spend eternity with Him (**John 14:3**)? **And if so, what does that look like? And I mean that very literally.**

And as we get going here in this heaven study, do know this might be like getting fed through a firehose if this is new to you. So just grab the pieces you can. And remember you now have the notes and can go back and listen to this teaching again on the website (freedomcommunity.church).

I. WHAT WILL YOU BE DOING IN HEAVEN?

I want you to find a piece of paper (maybe even the back of a page of the notes) and pen and take the next five minutes and list as many things you can think of that you will be doing in heaven. And this includes you who are at home or listening at a later time also. Then we will jump back in. **So don't read ahead yet!**



OK, I know some of you are cheaters and just couldn't help yourselves 😊. But for those of you who followed the instructions, **1)** did you find there just wasn't enough time to write down all you were trying to get on paper? Or **2)** was it more like there were not enough things to write down?

- I originally created this series for college age groups who would show up for a three-month period to the Mission in Mexico for discipleship training. Don't worry, each course was a one-week intensive of 8 hours a day for just a week. I'm confident we will finish this before my next Christmas. 😊

- I gave each of those groups 30 minutes instead of five. But most often five minutes was all that was needed because in truth (regardless of age range) **most believers know much less about heaven than you would imagine**. Yet as always, there are exceptions. But for the most part this holds true.
- And what we know about heaven will **1** most certainly impact how we live our lives now **2** and help us to determine what is really important in light of eternity. This is why we are doing this series. And when we're done with this section on heaven, I will ask this question once more and give you a chance to see if your understanding has changed or been expanded.

I. II. THE BASICS OF HEAVEN AND ETERNAL LIFE

When we talk about heaven and eternal life there are many questions that many struggle to answer. But the Bible gives us so much that it really shouldn't be this way. And many have used [1 Cor. 2:9](#) to tell me we can't really know, which reads "*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*". And if that's all it said then I would have to agree. But the very next verse says, "*But God has revealed them* (the things which He has prepared for us) *to us through His Spirit* ([1 Cor. 2:10](#))."

- After reading what Randy Alcorn wrote in his book "Heaven" about the number of individuals who are pastors and theologians who haven't addressed the subject of heaven much, I did some of my own looking.
- Randy Alcorn said when he was going through the syllabuses of Bible colleges and seminaries he realized there's a lot of teaching on **1** how to live on this earth, **2** what will happen in the tribulation (as if the church will be here. Something I gladly report will not be the case), **3** eschatology (matters of the end times), **4** Christology (the study of the nature of Jesus), **when some spend 50 pages on hell, they would spend one on heaven**. And he made case after case that this was common for every subject in comparison to a study on heaven.
- So here are the things we are going to look at in the first half of this series, **1** the transitional **location** of Heaven, and **2** the **states** we will be in during these transitions (which, as we will see, will involve **3 basic divisions**). And I hope you will conclude that understanding the basics of these two pieces and these three basic divisions of time will answer so many questions.

And as you've likely guessed, much of what we will be looking at comes from the book of [Revelation](#). But it's certainly not the only book in the Bible that speaks in this regard.

Before Jesus Came	After Jesus coming	The rapture	The Tribulation and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb	Jesus' 2 nd coming	The Millennial Kingdom	The Eternal State

1. BEFORE JESUS CAME (the first division of time)

Before Jesus came, *Sheol* was the **location** where those who died went. It literally translates, "the place of the dead" or "of departed souls". With no differentiation given between those who put their faith in God and those who rejected Him. It's used roughly 63 times from [Gen. 37:35](#) to [Hab. 2:5](#) (Blue Letter Bible).

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- In the Greek it's called *Hades* ([Luke 16:26](#)). And is used 11 times in the NKJV in the New Testament.
- It's divided into two sides for which we have very limited knowledge. [Luke 16:19-26](#) (which I do not believe is a parable because Jesus uses specific names and He does not identify as a parable) gives us the most vivid account.
- **1)** One side is identified as, and called, *Torment* ([Luke 16:23](#), [Ezek. 26:20](#)). **2)** The other side as *Abraham's breast* (like when John leaned in on Jesus' chest at the last supper) and *Paradise* ([Luke 23:43](#)). **3)** And there's a *great gulf* between them ([Luke 16:26](#)).

Which leaves us with an important piece of information. When Jesus died, He did not descend into "hell", because it's appointed for mankind to die one time and then face the judgment ([Heb. 9:27](#)) (once this body dies, what we chose to do about Jesus has been finalized. The time for choosing will be past).

- One of the two passages that's often misunderstood in this regard is [Psalm 16:10-11](#), which says of Messiah, "...*you will not leave my soul in Sheol*...". The problem is some have falsely translated *Sheol* as "hell" in [Psalm 16](#) and therefore created a lot of unnecessary confusion.
- The second verse people get confused with is [Eph. 4:8-10](#), which says Jesus *first descended into the lower parts of the earth* before ascending into heaven. And what we know is that Jesus went into the side called *paradise* (not "hell" or "torment"), before ascending into heaven with all who had placed their **faith** in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob before Jesus came ([Heb. 11:19-21](#), [Gen. 15:6](#)).
- In [Rev. 20:13-14](#) we learn what happens to those who are on the side called "*torment*", as it tells us after Jesus returns to rule and reign for a thousand years that *death and Hades were* (or will be) *cast into the lake of fire* ("Gehenna" in the Greek or "hell" in English). So even that location will change. **Have you ever thought about this before? How might it impact your biblical understanding?**

The next (2nd) piece to look at is what the state of the **soul** was for those who died before Jesus came. Which we kind of already did since we looked at the locations where the soul could go.

- Paul tells us we are tripartite beings (consisting of three parts—although not all agree) in [1 Thes. 5:23](#), saying "*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.*" (see also [Heb. 4:12](#)).
- [Ecc. 12:7](#) tells us that when the body dies, "*Then the dust will return to the earth as it was* (that's the body), *And the spirit will return to God who gave it.* Meaning the soul never dies. But do know [Luke 12:4-5](#) tells us this same reality, yet on the other side. Meaning those who have not believed and received God through Jesus, will have their souls separated from God for eternity.
- Sin causes us to be **spiritually** dead (and results in the **body** being subject to death), but the **soul** is eternal. Which if you think about means those who have not come to Jesus could be identified as consisting of only two components (being they are spiritually dead). And for those who have put their faith in Jesus, the soul and spirit are forever intertwined, yet two unique parts (being that one can exist without the other).

At the death of the body our identity and memories will be intact. We don't get a lot of examples because we're not supposed to seek out those who are mediums or "channelers" for the dead ([Lev. 19:31](#), [Deut. 18:10-12](#)). But here is what we do have. And I certainly find it informative. **To say it gives me great hope is an understatement.**

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- [Isa. 65:16-17](#) “*And he who swears in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hidden from My (Gods) eyes. “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.”* So, if the troubles are forgotten by us, and God has hidden them from His eyes (choosing not to remember them), what about the relationships and joys of the past when we get to heaven? I think the Bible makes it clear those will remain intact, while giving us the opportunity to continue collecting new experiences in heaven.
- As a matter of fact, [1 Cor. 13:12](#) says, “*For now we see in a mirror, dimly* (speaking of our condition in this perishing body while upon this fallen earth), *but then* (speaking of our coming eternal home) *face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.*” Imagine how this is going to impact your relationships.
- We can see a glimpse of this reality of our retaining our memory after the death of the body in [1](#) the account of Saul going to the witch in Endor to summon Samuel from the dead ([1 Sam. 28:15-20](#)) (which we will cover lightly now and then return to next week). What we will find then is even though Samuel had died and been summoned from the dead, he had perfect memory of himself and others. [2](#) Then we have the mount of transfiguration in [Luke 9:28-33](#), where Moses (being dead bodily for 13 centuries) and Elijah (being dead bodily almost nine centuries) both have full memory of who they are. And actually, much more than that. It’s clear from the conversation that they have been very aware and alive throughout this entire time. [3](#) And we already looked at the rich man and Lazarus ([Luke 16:19-31](#)). Which, again, I do not believe is a parable.

Now what we have been looking into is the state of those who were alive and died before Jesus came. Yet as we close today, I sure think it’s pretty awesome for us to consider these things in regard to ourselves also.

- As I think of losses I’ve encountered, or even those on the horizon, this reality is more than comforting. **It’s a significant piece of the eternal hope we have in Jesus.** It’s what makes it possible to say goodbye for now, knowing it’s not forever.
- And it tells me when I see the faces of those I have known and loved in heaven, we won’t be starting over as strangers or those who have had a partial lobotomy. **But rather that our relationships will continue on.** But this time (and forever more) without the weight of a fallen world and a sin nature. And all of this means we will both know each other and be known in a way that has not previously been possible. Try to picture or imagine this.
- If that doesn’t make you long for heaven, I don’t know what will. And there are so many other reasons to set your heart there. **But the greatest is because that’s where the fullness of our God is waiting for us. God revealed this to us because He wants us to know ([1 Cor. 2:10](#))!**

CROSS REFERENCES

Rev 9:16–17 NKJV – (16) Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them. (17) And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone.

Rev 19:17–21 NKJV – (17) Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, (18) "that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great." (19) And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. (20) Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. (21) And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Isa 17:1–3 NKJV – (1) The burden against Damascus. "Behold, Damascus will cease from being a city, And it will be a ruinous heap. (2) The cities of Aroer are forsaken; They will be for flocks Which lie down, and no one will make them afraid. (3) The fortress also will cease from Ephraim, The kingdom from Damascus, And the remnant of Syria; They will be as the glory of the children of Israel," Says the LORD of hosts.

Mat 16:1–3 NKJV – (1) Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. (2) He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red'; (3) "and in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times.

Luk 19:41–44 NKJV – (41) Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, (42) saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. (43) "For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, (44) "and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

1Th 3:13 NKJV – 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.

1Th 4:14 NKJV – For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

Jhn 14:3 NKJV – "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.

Gen 37:35 NKJV – And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, "For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning." Thus his father wept for him.

Hab 2:5 NKJV – "Indeed, because he transgresses by wine, He is a proud man, And he does not stay at home. Because he enlarges his desire as hell, And he is like death, and cannot be satisfied, He gathers to himself all nations And heaps up for himself all peoples.

Eze 26:20 NKJV – 'then I will bring you down with those who descend into the Pit, to the people of old, and I will make you dwell in the lowest part of the earth, in places desolate from antiquity, with those who go down to the Pit, so that you may never be inhabited; and I shall establish glory in the land of the living.

Luk 23:43 NKJV – And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

Luk 16:19–26 NKJV – (19) "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. (20) "But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, (21) "desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. (22) "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. (23) "And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. (24) "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' (25) "But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. (26) 'And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

Heb 9:27 NKJV – And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,

Psa 16:10–11 NKJV – (10) For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. (11) You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Eph 4:8–10 NKJV – (8) Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men." (9) (Now this, "He ascended"--what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? (10) He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

Heb 11:19–21 NKJV – (19) concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense. (20) By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. (21) By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.

Gen 15:6 NKJV – And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

Rev 20:13–14 NKJV – (13) 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. (14) Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Heb 4:12 NKJV – For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Luk 12:4–5 NKJV – (4) "And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. (5) "But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!

Lev 19:31 NKJV – 'Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God.

Deu 18:10–12 NKJV – (10) "There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, (11) "or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. (12) "For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you.

1Co 2:10 NKJV – But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

1Sa 28:15–20 NKJV – (15) Now Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" And Saul answered, "I am deeply distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God has departed from me and does not answer me anymore, neither by prophets nor by dreams. Therefore I have called you, that you may reveal to me what I should do." (16) Then Samuel said: "So why do you ask me, seeing the LORD has departed from you and has become your enemy? (17) "And the LORD has done for Himself as He spoke by me. For the LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. (18) "Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD nor execute His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you this day. (19) "Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The LORD will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines." (20) Immediately Saul fell full length on the ground, and was dreadfully afraid because of the words of Samuel. And there was no strength in him, for he had eaten no food all day or all night.

Luk 9:28–33 NKJV – (28) Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. (29) As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. (30) And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, (31) who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. (32) But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. (33) Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, that Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"--not knowing what he said.

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