

ED HINDSON

FUTURE  
GLORY



HARVEST PROPHECY  
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## Future Glory

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To  
**Dr. David Jeremiah**  
America's pastor  
Bible expositor  
prophetic preacher  
and  
lifelong friend





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When the Chief Shepherd appears,  
you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away...  
To Him be the glory and dominion forever and ever.

Amen.

1 PETER 5:4,11



## PREFACE

**G**od has planned an incredible eternal experience for every believer. We were created for eternity and redeemed for eternity. But life has a way of focusing our attention on our immediate cares and not our ultimate goal. We are easily caught up in our daily tasks that take most of our time and attention away from the ultimate purpose for which we were created. The Bible reminds us that while God has “made everything beautiful in its time,” He has also “put eternity in [our] hearts” (Ecclesiastes 3:11). No matter how hard we try, we are never satisfied with anything less than that which is eternal. Joe Stowell said, “Life is most disappointing, most despairing when it is lived as though this world is all we have.”<sup>1</sup>

Jesus said of those who believed in Him, “And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish” (John 10:28). As He prayed the night before His crucifixion, Jesus said, “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17:3). In his first letter, Jesus’ disciple John said, “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life (1 John 5:13).

Eternity is a long time. It lasts forever. Sometimes people ask: What will we be doing all that time? They assume once we die and go to heaven that’s all there is to your eternal life. But the Bible promises so much more. In fact, there are at least seven things predicted in Scripture that every believer will eventually experience. In the pages that

follow, we will examine those seven promises and all that they will mean in your amazing future.

Once we understand the sequence of events that God has planned for our eternal future, we can face the future with confidence. If we can trust Him for heaven, we can trust Him for eternity. The last thing we will be doing is floating around alone on a cloud. In the vast expanse of the universe, we will serve the Lord forever. We will be busy, active, and living in a redeemed community in perfect fellowship with the entire family of God.

In recent years, I have had the wonderful privilege of speaking about our eternal destiny to vast audiences of believers in some of America's greatest churches. Once people grasp all that God has planned for their eternal future, they are thrilled, blessed, and amazed beyond all their expectations. In the pages that follow, I want to take you with me on an incredible journey into our prophetic future and our eternal destiny.





1

# DOES GOD REALLY HAVE A FUTURE FOR ME?

**G**od has planned an amazing future for every believer. What we have already experienced of God's grace in our lives is just a glimpse of all that He has prepared for us. We have more living ahead of us than behind us. We have only just begun our eternal journey. The Bible reminds us:

“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard...  
The things which God has prepared for those who love  
Him.”

(1 Corinthians 2:9)

I have been in the ministry for over fifty years, trying to help people go to heaven. While I've discovered most people want to go to heaven, they are not in a hurry to get there. Most of us go out of our way to delay the inevitable. If the destination is so great, why do we go kicking and screaming? If heaven is real, then we should have a driving passion to be there. We don't want to rush the timing of God, but neither should we dread all that the Lord has for us.

There is a joke told about a married couple in their fifties. They were in terrible health and ate all the wrong things. Finally, the wife became

convicted of their ways and told her husband, “We have to start a really serious diet or we’re not going to live much longer.”

She put him on a strict diet of water, kale, bananas, and not much more! Sure enough, they lost weight and looked great. About ten years later they were tragically killed in a car accident. As they arrived in heaven, they discovered it was more phenomenal than they could have ever imagined. Heaven was more beautiful than they had ever dreamed. There was food everywhere! You could eat all you wanted and never gain weight. There were golf courses and swimming pools. It was unbelievable.

The wife looked at her husband and said, “Isn’t this wonderful?”

He looked at her and answered, “Yes! And if it wasn’t for you and that awful health food, we could have been here ten years ago!”

I want to remind you, we are on a journey. Our journey has a destination. That destination is heaven. The older you get the more clearly you realize that this world is not all there is in your future.

The older you are, the sooner you want Jesus to come back. Why? Because you’re running out of time! On the other hand, my students at university are in no hurry for Him to come. They say things like, “I hope Jesus isn’t going to come too soon!”

“Why?”

“I’m not married! I don’t want Him to come before I get married.” Then six months after they’re married they want to know, “How soon is He coming?”

I like to remind them that a God who loves them enough to send His Son to the cross to die for their sins, loves them enough to come back when the time is right. You can trust Him for His perfect timing. The promises in Scripture are very clear that whoever has the Son has eternal life (1 John 5:12). Once you receive Jesus as your Savior, the Spirit of God comes to live within your heart and soul. You already have eternal life. Believers will simply change the place of our existence with that gift of everlasting life. We will live forever because the eternal God lives in us.

The Bible describes God as “the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity” and yet, dwells “with him who is of a contrite and

lowly spirit” (Isaiah 57:15 ESV). Think of it! The almighty, eternal God has made us eternally alive by the power of His Spirit and the presence of His person (Romans 8:11). We shall live as long as God lives because He lives in us.

I grew up in a non-Christian home. There was no God, no Jesus, no Bible—nobody attended church. My parents were not raging atheists of any sort. They simply didn’t know any better and didn’t really care. They were just trying to do the best they could. Both of my parents dropped out of school in the eighth grade. They had to survive the Depression and World War II. They worked their entire lives but with what appeared to be no real meaning or purpose. Certainly with no eternal perspective.

Then one day, a flier came to our home from a local church that was advertising Vacation Bible School. My mother read the flyer and it said the activity lasted five days. She probably thought, *I can get him out of the house for five days!* It was at that event, VBS, I heard that Jesus loved me, that He died for my sins, that He rose from the dead, and that He could give me the gift of everlasting life. Salvation was free, and even in my young mind I recognized a good deal. I raised my hand, “Yes, I’m in! I’m ready to agree to that.”

I’m thankful that the lady who counseled me, Mrs. Johnson, was very thorough in helping me understand this was not just a little kid decision about Santa Claus. This was the real deal for the rest of my life. “Are you willing to commit your life to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior?” she asked. “Are you ready to say yes to Him?”

God moved in my heart for me to say, “Yes, I’m ready for that. I believe. I’ll trust Him as my Savior right now.”

I realize not every childhood profession is the real thing, but for me it was the real deal. It was a change of course for me and ultimately for our family. I returned home that last day of Vacation Bible School and my mother asked, “How was Bible school today?”

“It was great! I got saved,” I said exuberantly.

She had no idea what I was talking about. She patted me on the head and said, “That’s nice. What did you make?”

“It’s not about the stuff we made, it’s about giving my life to Jesus. I’ve come to know Him as my Savior forever!”

My parents eventually did come to faith in their forties and had a lot of catching up to do. Yet God began to change the course of our entire family experience at that point, just as He has changed many others over the centuries.

So much has taken place in my life since that time. We now live in a world where we have an overabundance of news—and most of it is bad. Even when people talk about Bible prophecy, the focus is often on doom and gloom. To be sure, there are divine judgments that will take place in the future. I do not want to overlook the seriousness of those future judgments.

Serious Bible readers have long understood the dual principles of good news for believers and bad news for unbelievers. Believers understand that God is in control of the details of our lives. Whether we live or die, heaven is our destiny. Therefore, we live with confidence in the future because we know who holds the future.

At the same time, our hearts go out to unbelievers who face eternity without God. Many will be left behind in a world under the judgment of the wrath of God. The recent crisis of the global pandemic is but a glimpse of a far greater disaster that awaits the unbelieving world in the future (Revelation 6:8).

However, in this book, I want to talk about the positive aspects we can look forward to regarding the last days. As believers, we need hope. I don’t need to remind you we are facing some of the most precarious times in the history of the world. The future of our nation and the whole world is really at stake. We can focus on the problems, but sometimes if we focus too much on the negative, we lose sight of our real destiny.

I’m reminded of the words of the apostle John who said, “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” (1 John 3:2-3). There is

something about the hope of the coming of Christ that lifts us up for the challenges of life here today.

Jesus appeared to John on the island of Patmos. John was one of the original disciples. He was the one who sat next to Jesus at the Last Supper. He was the only disciple who showed up at the cross. John was the one to whom Jesus entrusted the earthly care of His mother. Yet when John saw the glorified Jesus, he said, “When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead” (Revelation 1:17).

Don’t think it will be a casual thing to wander into heaven and say, “Hi. Where’s Jesus?” If John fell on his face, where do you think we will be? On our faces worshipping the Savior, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. The one who loved us, died for us, and gave Himself for us. Because we believe He literally rose from the dead, the promise is that we will also literally live with Him forever.

We’re living in a time when people don’t understand the literal parts of the Bible. I’ve had people ask me, “Well, if you die and go to heaven as a spirit, isn’t that good enough?” No, because the promise of the Bible is that your body will literally be resurrected one day and reunited with your spirit at the time of the rapture. The Lord will bring with Him those that have departed, raise the dead bodies, rapture the living, and we will all be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17).

In Bible prophecy, the main things are the plain things. The facts are clear. Jesus said, “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” (John 14:1-3). He will receive us to Himself. Jesus said this after Judas, the unbeliever, left the room. That promise was not only for the eleven believing disciples; it is a promise for every believer of all time. God has promised that Christ will return for us.

I have found the following paradigm to be helpful when interpreting biblical prophecies:

*Fact:* Jesus is coming again.

*Interpretation:* When and how (views)

*Speculation:* How old will we be in heaven?

In this chapter, we will preview the seven amazing *promises* we can

look forward to in eternity as believers in Jesus Christ. We'll talk more about each of these in the chapters to follow. For now, let me briefly introduce each of these seven promises and why they are important.

## 1. The Rapture of Believers

The next major event on the prophetic calendar is the rapture of the church. There are a lot of things that *might* happen before the rapture occurs. But there is nothing that *must* happen before the archangel shouts, the trumpet sounds, and we leave this world to be with Christ.

The belief in the rapture is a fundamental truth of biblical theology. Yet so many people today are abandoning belief in the rapture. I was sitting in a church where a friend of mine from another denomination was the pastor. He was preaching an entire sermon *against* the rapture. After about fifty minutes, he said, "And so we see there never will be a rapture. All we have to look forward to is trouble, trouble, and more trouble."

As he ended the sermon, his own congregation moaned out loud. I was tempted to stand up in the back and shout, "Therefore comfort one another with these words" (from 1 Thessalonians 4:18), but I didn't. Instead, I talked to him after the service. I said, "I know you and I have a different view on the timing of the rapture. But we both know there must be a rapture. There has to be a time when the dead are raised and the living are caught up. We just differ on *when* it's going to happen."

If you disagree on the timing of the rapture, please don't tell people, "There's never going to be a rapture." No, there must be a rapture or the Bible is not true. There must be a time when the archangel shouts, when the trumpet sounds, and the dead in Christ are raised and the living are caught up (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). We may differ on the *timing* of the rapture but not the *fact* of the rapture.

You may hear people say, "The word *rapture* is not in the Bible. Why should I believe in the rapture if it's not in the Bible?" Well, the word *Bible* is not in the Bible. But the concept of inspired Scripture is (2 Timothy 3:16). The word for rapture in the original Greek New Testament is the word *harpazo*, meaning to be "caught up" or "snatched

away.” The word *Trinity* is not in the Bible either, but we believe in the triune God, the co-equal deity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The word is not in the Bible, but the concept is. The word *Sunday* is not in the Bible, but we worship on Sunday as the Lord’s Day because that’s when Jesus rose from the dead and the early church assembled to celebrate the risen Lord on that day. A concept can be taught in Scripture whether the word appears there in English or not.

The truth of the Bible is there *must* be a rapture. There must be a catching up. There must be a time when dead believers are raised, and the living are caught up into the presence of God. If somebody doesn’t believe in the pretribulational rapture, they should not go around saying, “Well, I don’t believe there is ever going to be a rapture.” They simply don’t agree with the *timing* of the event. The fact of the rapture is clear in the Bible. If you say you don’t believe in the rapture, you don’t believe the Bible. You might as well rip 1 Thessalonians 4 out of the Bible and throw it away. It’s the whole basis of the believer’s blessed hope (Titus 2:13).

I’ve even heard some critics teach, “I don’t think all those things about the future are really essential doctrines.” Did you know the apostle Paul was in Thessalonica for only about three weeks (Acts 17:1-10)? During that time, he taught them about the second coming of Christ (2 Thessalonians 2:5). Apparently, he considered it an essential doctrine.

Suppose someone said to you, “I’m going away on a long trip. I’m going to be gone for a long time, but I will be back.” If that was someone you loved with all your heart, you’d be watching for them to return. This promise was not made by a human being. It was made by the Son of God (Matthew 25:14-19). He will come back for you. The first amazing promise we have to look forward to as believers in Christ is the rapture of the living and the resurrection of the dead.

## 2. The Father’s House

Second, *where* do we go at the time of the rapture? We are going to the Father’s house. Why? Because Jesus promised to take the bride

home to the Father's house. In John 14, Jesus taught that in His Father's house are many rooms. The King James Version says "mansions" and has given people the idea we'll each have our own luxury estate. However, the original language mentions "rooms." Why? Because it is one big house, with lots of rooms. All the believers of all time are going to dwell together in the Father's mansion.

Jesus taught in John 14:3-4, "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." The rapture must occur at some point prior to this to take the bride to the Father's house. This heaven will also clearly be a physical place. Ron Rhodes explains:

There are numerous indications in the New Testament that heaven will be a physical place. For example, as noted previously in this book, Jesus in John 14:1-3 affirmed: "In my Father's *house* are many *rooms*; if it were not so, I would have told you. 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" (emphasis added). The words "house," "rooms," and "a place" suggest a physical place where the physically resurrected redeemed will forever live.<sup>1</sup>

Now people can argue on the details of the timing. They can say they think the rapture is before the tribulation, or in the middle, or at the end, but it must happen somewhere. You can't just throw it away. You must place it somewhere. Ask yourself, "What are the factors in the timing?"

At some point, the Lord will come in the clouds, resurrect the dead, rapture the living, and take the bride to the Father's house—to heaven! He's been preparing that place for almost two thousand years. If He could create the world instantly and it's as beautiful as it is even under the curse of sin, imagine what heaven will look like. He's been working on it all this time ever since He left. When the Father says, "Go get the



bride and bring her to the Father's house," then Jesus will come for His own. Every genuine believer since the first day Jesus gave that promise until the rapture of the entire bride of Christ will be gathered together to the Father's house.

### 3. The Judgment Seat of Christ

Third, we go to the Father's house to the judgment seat of Christ. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:10, "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." You are going to the platform to receive your rewards for serving the Lord, for faithfulness of service. You may think, *Well, nobody knows me. Nobody really understands what I do for God.* God does. God keeps the record book, and you will not go unrewarded for all the unseen actions you have done in the name of Jesus.

This promise runs all the way through Scripture. Yes, there will be the challenge of loss of rewards and loss of opportunities perhaps. However, the truth is that we're all headed to the bema seat where the Lord Himself will give those final rewards. When I go to heaven, I'm going to see Jesus, right in the Father's house at the judgment seat of Christ. As a believer, you will too. We need to ask ourselves, "What would we like to hear our Lord say?" I want to hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21,23). It is interesting Jesus said, "Good and faithful servant." He didn't say, "Good and successful servant." He didn't say, "Good and famous servant." He said, "Good and faithful servant."

Greg Laurie observes the importance of our faithful service:

Jesus told the story of a wealthy man who went on a journey (see Matthew 25:14-30). As he left, he called his servants and gave to each of them a small amount of money. He told them to invest it while he was away. Two of the three servants did invest the money, and it multiplied. To those two faithful servants the master said, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few

things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord” (Matthew 25:21).

Notice that those who were faithful were rewarded accordingly. But notice one more thing: their rewards were more opportunities to serve. If you are faithful in the little things, God will give you other opportunities to do greater things.<sup>2</sup>

Your faithfulness will be rewarded by the Lord Himself. God is keeping the record.

#### **4. The Marriage of the Lamb**

Fourth, we are headed to a wedding! One day, we will attend the marriage of the Lamb in heaven. Revelation 19 builds to this great climax before the return of Christ when the apostle John speaks about this future marriage. The chapter opens with a chorus of hallelujahs. Then it says in Revelation 19:7, “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.” The context of this marriage is clearly pictured as taking place in heaven.

How did the church get there? There had to be a rapture. There must be a time when the church goes *up* in the rapture to go to the marriage in heaven. The rapture must precede this event. At the marriage of the Lamb, you will receive a white robe, the gift of righteousness from Christ Himself. Did you ever ask yourself, “Why do brides in the Western world wear white dresses?” The tradition is right out of the book of Revelation. It is the destiny of the true believer.

The bride of Christ is going to be adorned in a robe of white. We will receive a gift of righteousness we do not deserve, did not earn, and cannot work to obtain. We can only receive it by His grace. It is a gift to us and we receive it by faith. It’s God’s gift to our response of faith. He provides it. We receive it and all of heaven rejoices. No matter what your experience has been on earth—married a long time, a short time, several times, or not at all—as a believer you are headed to the greatest marriage of all time: the ceremony of the spiritual union of the believers with Jesus Christ in heaven.

## 5. The Return of Christ

Fifth, we have the hope of the return of Jesus Christ. At the end of the tribulation period, the world will be a mess. When humanity is at its lowest point, Christ will come to make things right. Revelation 19:11-16 describes this heavenly procession. Many people do not realize we will return *with* Him! Jesus will no longer be riding a donkey as He did on Palm Sunday. He will return on a white horse in triumph. There is a two-sided message in the book of Revelation. It contains a message of hope for the believer, but a message of judgment for the unbeliever. This great climax of Revelation 19 begins with four hallelujahs (vv. 1-6). Heaven rejoices over the fall of the kingdoms of the world and the coming of the Savior.

Then the reader is introduced to the marriage of the church to Christ in heaven. Revelation 19:7-8 says:

“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.” And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

The church will go up to heaven in the rapture to return with Christ *after* the marriage of the Lamb.

While angels will attend Christ at His return (Matthew 25:31), this is the church, the bride of Christ, marching out of heaven with her warrior husband in triumph in Revelation 19:11-16. It is no longer a persecuted or martyred church, but a victorious church. The raptured church has gone to the marriage. She returns in triumph, marches out of heaven with her warrior husband to reign and rule in His kingdom on earth. One writer notes, “The word [*armies*] is in the plural number, meaning that at least two separate armies will return with Him. One army is known as *hosts of the Lord*, or the angelic army [Mat. 16:27]... Another army that will return with Jesus is the army of the Church saints who had been raptured previously.”<sup>3</sup>

Jesus will have the words written on his thigh “KING OF KINGS

AND LORD OF LORDS.” He will speak the word at the battle of Armageddon and eliminate the army of the Antichrist. He will not fight with guns and tanks and bombs. He who spoke the world into existence will *speak* and the battle will be over. It will be the battle that never is a battle. He will slay the enemy with the word of His mouth (v. 15). He will then take the beast and the false prophet and cast them alive into the lake of fire, and Satan will be bound in the abyss for a thousand years (Revelation 19:19–20:3).

Won't it be great to live in a world where Satan is bound? Scripture gives us numerous examples of the ways Satan attacks believers:

- Satan filled the heart of Ananias to lie to the Holy Spirit, resulting in the death of him and his wife (Acts 5:3).
- Paul said that Satan is blinding the eyes of nonbelievers in this current age so that they should not receive the gospel (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).
- Paul told the Corinthians that Satan transforms himself (deceptively) into an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14).
- Paul was given a thorn in the flesh, “a messenger of Satan” to attack his body (2 Corinthians 12:7).
- Paul told the Ephesians that Satan, the prince of the power of the air, “now works in the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2).
- Paul told the Ephesians not to give place to the devil (Ephesians 4:27) and that they wrestled against “spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12).
- Paul was hindered by Satan from visiting the Thessalonian church (1 Thessalonians 2:18).
- The coming of the lawless one, the Antichrist, will be “according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs and lying wonders” (2 Thessalonians 2:9). This is fulfilled,

in part, by the activities of the false prophet documented in the book of Revelation.

- Paul delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander to Satan so that they might learn not to blaspheme (1 Timothy 1:20).
- James warns believers to submit to God and resist the devil (James 4:7).
- Peter warns believers to be sober and vigilant because “your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).
- John tells us that “the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one” (1 John 5:19).
- Satan is a source of deception and rebellion throughout the events of the book of Revelation (Revelation 12:9; 13:14; 19:20; 20:7-10).<sup>4</sup>

This epic battle will end Satan’s influence in our world, binding him for a thousand years. Only after the millennial reign of Christ will Satan be allowed one final desperate act of rebellion before his eternal judgment and condemnation in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10).

## **6. The Millennial Reign**

The sixth thing promised in the believer’s future is the millennial reign with Christ on earth. After defeating His enemies at Armageddon, Jesus will enter Jerusalem and begin reigning from His rightful throne for a thousand years. This period of time, called the millennial reign or millennial kingdom, is described in Revelation 20:1-6:

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. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

Satan is bound and the saints reign and rule with Christ. This will include the resurrected Old Testament saints, because Jesus said He would sit down in the kingdom with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to drink the fruit of the vine again with the people of Israel when they say, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

Those who seek to offer an alternative view supporting a nonliteral amillennialism must find a way to deal with the fact that these verses emphasize a literal thousand-year period six times. The church will be there, the Old Testament saints will be there, and the tribulation saints will be there.

As great as the millennial kingdom will be, however, it will not be the end. After this thousand-year period, Satan, who will never repent, will make one final rebellion and be thrown into the lake of fire forever, leading to the seventh and most glorious part of our amazing future.

## **7. The New Heavens and Earth**

Our seventh future promise is the glorious eternal city, the New Jerusalem. Author Ron Rhodes has noted, “Each of us likely already has an idea regarding what heaven might be like. The chances are, though, that our culturally influenced conceptions are woefully inadequate to

capture the full glory and splendor of what truly awaits the children of God in the afterlife.”<sup>5</sup>

The final two chapters of the Bible provide our best description of the new heaven, new earth, and new heavenly city where there will be no more curse or sin. The details of our eternity future are beyond understanding, leaving the apostle John saying, “Lord Jesus, come quickly” (see Revelation 22:20). Norman Geisler emphasizes the duration of heaven, saying:

Heaven will endure as long as God does, and God is eternal; heaven is where we will experience eternal life in its fullness. Further, heaven is the fulfillment of God’s promised everlasting life to believers, “the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time” (Titus 1:2). Jesus said, “The righteous [will go] to eternal life” (Matt. 25:46), and John declared, “I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: ‘To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!’” (Rev. 5:13).<sup>6</sup>

The book of Revelation ends by introducing us to eternity—the eternal city, the New Jerusalem, that will last forever and ever (also Hebrews 11:13-16). Paradise is regained, and the tree of life will be there. There will be no death, no sorrow, no pain, and no sin. What will be there? God and the Lamb. They will be the light and the glory of the eternal city. They will be the temple, because we will see Him face-to-face and have an audience with the King, living in His presence forever and ever.

## **Just Getting Started**

These are the seven amazing things you can look forward to in your future if you know the Lord as your Savior. If you aren’t sure where you stand with Jesus, this is where you must begin. He called on people to repent, believe, and follow Him (Luke 24:47; John 11:25;

Matthew 16:24). He simply asks you to do the same. Romans 10:9 teaches, “If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

When you do believe, 1 John 5:13 tells us we can have confidence in the Lord’s power to save us: “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.” Scripture was written to help us know we have eternal life. This eternal life begins the moment we believe in Jesus and it extends to eternity future as we experience God’s amazing plan for our eternal lives.

### **God Is with You in Tough Times**

In the meantime, we may still face life’s challenges. Many respond in fear, yet as believers, we can trust that God is with us in tough times. The Father’s promises are for both time and eternity. In his second letter to the Christians in Corinth, Paul gave words of comfort. He reminded them as he reminds us of several important truths.

#### ***Reality (2 Corinthians 1:3-5)***

Trouble is a part of life in a fallen world. We all deal with it time and again. Everybody has problems. Abraham lied. Moses fled. Elijah hid. Peter denied. Paul suffered. But despite his suffering, Paul reminds us God is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort (v. 3). He comforts us in all our troubles (v. 4), not from them. Suffering is part of God’s purifying work in our lives. Peter tells us that believers are often called to suffer for the cause of Christ and the sake of the gospel (1 Peter 1:17-21).

#### ***Resolve (2 Corinthians 1:6-7)***

Problems change us one way or the other. Pain can make us bitter or better. Peter’s failure led to his tears of repentance and his ultimate restoration (Luke 22:61-62; John 21:15-17). Judas’s betrayal led only to remorse and suicide (Matthew 27:3-5). In each case, we learn there is



a right way and a wrong way to deal with our problems and failures. Whatever we decide to do in the face of crisis will make us better or bitter. The choice is up to us. We must resolve to face each challenge with God's help. Paul could say whether we are *afflicted* or *comforted* we will receive the *consolation and salvation* of God Himself (vv. 6-7).

### ***Resource (2 Corinthians 1:8-10)***

Our problems and suffering cause us to turn to God for help. Challenges like a global pandemic make us realize we cannot trust in ourselves alone for the answer. When we are in trouble, pressed beyond measure, despair even of life, or like Paul, feel we have the sentence of death (vv. 8-9), we can only trust in God who has delivered us (in the past) and delivers us (in the present) and will yet deliver us in the future (v. 10). He alone is our ultimate resource in times of trouble.

### ***Relationships (2 Corinthians 1:11-12)***

While God is our ultimate resource, He works through our relationships with other believers to encourage us. As Paul faced his own problems, he reminded the believers they had helped him in two significant ways to endure his suffering. First, he said, "You also helping together in prayer for us." In times of trouble we need to know that other believers are praying for us. I need your prayers and you need to know I am praying for you. Second, Paul said that their gift helped him to carry on God's work on their behalf (v. 11).

What can we learn from 2 Corinthians 1:3-11?

1. Everybody has problems.
2. God is greater than our problems.
3. God can overrule our problems.
4. God can use our problems to His glory.
5. He will comfort us in all our troubles.
6. We must choose how we will respond when trouble comes.
7. God will ultimately deliver us from our problems.

Several years ago, my granddaughter Jennifer Barrick was severely injured in a terrible accident. Her family was hit by a drunk driver fleeing the police in a high-speed chase. Jennifer suffered multiple traumatic brain injuries and hovered between life and death for several months.

As she lay in a coma, unconscious of the world around her, Jen carried on an intimate conversation with the Lord. She talked to Jesus constantly as if He were right there with her. Her mind and body were injured but the Holy Spirit in her was not. He continued to soothe and comfort her over the weeks that followed.

Months later when Jen miraculously began to recover, she continued that same intimate conversation with God. And now, years later it still flows from her heart and soul. Today, as I finished writing this chapter, she texted me this prayer. And I felt led to share it with you.

Abundant Father, my heart finds rest in You and Your Truth. Thank you for being a True and Faithful KING. I run to you for strength, courage and direction. My prayer is that You would LEAD, GUIDE and DIRECT me every step of the way! Over my day today I want to pray Philippians 4:13, "I can do ALL THINGS through CHRIST who strengthens me." WOW! That is so reassuring. Take charge of my day GOOD SHEPHERD! TRUSTING You as we go together to:

The Promised Land

The Eternal City

The Father's House