



# The Relevance of Bible Prophecy to Christian Hope

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*Presentation notes for Vacation Bible School 2004 Adult Bible Study*

Note: These presentation notes are intended to go along with the PowerPoint presentation with the same title created by Dave Reagan of Lamb & Lion Ministries ([www.lamblion.com](http://www.lamblion.com)) for NACC in July, 2003. Scripture used in these notes is from the New King James Version.

## Slide 3

Tonight's presentation addresses the importance of Bible prophecy in understanding our Christian hope.

## Slide 4

This presentation is going to address four questions people should have about hope:

- What is your hope?
- How would you define your hope?
- Is your hope heaven?
- What does it mean that your hope is heaven?

## Slide 5

1 Corinthians 13:13 says, "*But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*"

We often hear sermons on faith

And love but it is rare to hear a sermon on your hope as a Christian. Love is called the greatest because it will endure throughout eternity. We will not need faith in eternity because faith is "*the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*" (Hebrews 11:1). In heaven, we will be with the Lord and see Him "*face to face*" (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Like faith, hope is also relevant to the present age we live in because it is what keeps us going and enables us to endure the hardships of this fallen world.

## Slide 6

So what do we hope in? What most people think of heaven is more Greek mythology than a Hebrew theology. People have formed their opinions about heaven from what the popular media has had to say about it rather than what the Bible has to say.

## Slide 7

Most people consider heaven to be a mythical place where those who die become disembodied angels with wings and spend their time floating around on clouds playing harps.

Certainly the Bible does refer to harps in heaven, for example, Revelation 14:2 says, "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."

But this is symbolic, a representation of a spiritual truth that we can not comprehend with our mortal minds. Harp music is symbolic of elegance, beauty, and creativity. All of which are characteristics of those who are in the presence of God.

## Slide 8

If you seek out what the Bible has to say about life after death, you'll discover that we have consciousness after death. Our souls do not sleep with our bodies waiting for the resurrection as some contend.

The Bible often refers to sleep when it is talking about death but this is a metaphor that applies to the body, the non-physical parts of us, our soul and spirit go to be with the Lord...

## Slide 9

The Apostle Paul understood this...

He said in Philippians 1:21, "*To live is Christ, and to die is gain.*"

"*I desire to depart and be with Christ, yet I am willing to remain in the flesh to serve the Lord.*" (Philippians 1:23-24)

"*I prefer to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.*" (2 Corinthians 5:8)

#### Slide 10

There is further evidence that there is no interruption in our conscious state and that we immediately go to be with the Lord when we die.

Revelation chapter 7 describes a “great multitude” of martyrs that are in heaven with God but have not received their resurrected bodies yet...

Revelation 7:17 says, “*for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will [future tense] shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will [future tense] wipe away every tear from their eyes.*”

#### Slide 11

Also, in Luke 16 Jesus describes the place of the dead before He paid for our sins on the cross. The Bible uses the terms Hades and Sheol to for this place where the Old Testament dead await judgment. Jesus called the place where the spirits of the just wait as Paradise and the place of the unjust as Torments. There is a great abyss that separates these two departments of Hades.

#### Slide 12

After Jesus paid the penalty of sin for the just by dying on the cross, 1 Peter 3:19 says, “*He went and preached to the spirits in prison.*” Ephesians 4:8-9 says, “*When He ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men. Now this, “He ascended”-- what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?”*

I think it reasonable to conclude from this that Jesus took those Old Testament saints to heaven with Him when He ascended.

#### Slide 13

Another great truth that the Bible teaches about life after death is that we will not be bodiless.

We will not be ethereal spirits.

According to 1 Thessalonians 5:23, people have a triune nature, we are “spirit, soul, and body.”

Since the Bible makes it clear that we will always have this triune nature, I take it that we must first receive an intermediate spirit body between our current fleshly body and our future glorified body.

#### Slide 14

There is plenty of other evidence that we will have bodies after death in Scripture...

In 1 Samuel 28 when Saul consulted a medium, or witch; she was shocked when a man who was recognized as Samuel actually appeared. Obviously she was expecting the usual demon that has no body which masquerades as the person that she calls up.

In Matthew 17, Jesus is transfigured into His glorified body to give some of the disciples a vision of heaven. Jesus’ face is mentioned and He is wearing clothes so He had to have a body. Moses and Elijah were recognized as being with Him so they had to have bodies.

In Luke 16, Jesus told a story about a certain rich man and Lazarus in Hades... since body parts were referred to such as tongue and fingers, I take it they had physical bodies.

And I already mentioned the Tribulation Martyrs of Revelation 7, they are described as wearing clothing and having eyes so this implies that they had bodies.

#### Slide 15

And Scripture is very clear that we will receive a physical body when the Lord Raptures the church into His presence

#### Slide 16

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 says, “*we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.*”

#### Slide 17

“*For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first,*”

#### Slide 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.*”

#### Slide 19

The Rapture is when all Christians living and dead receive their glorified bodies. The dead are resurrected and the living are transformed.

The Bible defines these resurrected bodies to be Imperishable, Glorious, Powerful, and Spiritual. It will last forever and will have capabilities beyond what we can get our mortal minds around.

#### Slide 20

1 Corinthians 15:42-44 says this about *“the resurrection of the dead... It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; 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. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.”*

#### Slide 21

The Bible also describes other characteristics of our resurrected bodies...

Our flawed bodies will be perfected, Isaiah 35:5-6 says, *“The eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb will shout for joy.”*

We will not be ethereal spirits but have tangible, physical bodies able to interact with the re-created world God will make for us.

Jesus invited doubting Thomas to examine Him to verify that His resurrected body had physical characteristics and said, *“See my hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”*

Jesus was the firstfruits of the resurrection which will occur for us *“at His coming”* (1 Corinthians 15:23). Our bodies will be like Jesus... 1 John 3:2 says, *“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.”*

#### Slide 22

Philippians 3:20-21 says, *“We eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.”*

#### Slide 23

Jesus made several post resurrection appearances where we can learn a lot about the permanent bodies we will have once we are resurrected. Jesus even ate food to show us that He was not a disembodied spirit but that He had a physical body.

#### Slide 24

Another thing people will discover if they dig into what the Bible says about life after death is that there will be meaningful activities both during the millennial reign of Christ and during the eternal state that follows.

God is our Creator and it is beyond comprehension that He retires from exercising His creativity in eternity. And God delights in seeing His Creation exercise creativity. God created us in His image, one of the profound aspects of this is that we are creative...

- In the beginning of history before the fall of man when the creation was described by God as being “very good” (Genesis 1:31), God gave Adam creative work to do in naming the animals (Genesis 2:19-20).
- God uses people to work with Him to sustain creation: *“God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth”* (Genesis 1:28).

#### Slide 25

Daniel 7 gives a glimpse of the work we will have in eternity... *“I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven one like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away...”*

#### Slide 26

*“And the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come. Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.”*

#### Slide 27

The book of Revelation reinforces the idea that we will have meaningful work in eternity. Revelation 2:26-27 says, *“And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from My Father;”*

#### **Slide 28**

Revelation 5:9-10 says, *“And they [the four living creatures and the 24 elders] sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”*

#### **Slide 29**

The 1000-year Millennial reign of Christ will be a foreshadowing of what eternity will be like. The mortal believers who survive the Tribulation will be the ones who re-populate the earth during the Millennial Kingdom. At the end of the tribulation, Jesus comes back to end the war of Armageddon and sets up His government on earth.

Jesus promised us in John 14:6 that *“where I am, there you may be also.”* So we will be with Him in our resurrected bodies when He establishes His kingdom on earth.

We can only speculate what we will be doing but I suspect that the Lord’s government will be made up entirely of resurrected saints.

We will serve as administrators...

Judges...

And Teachers...

What a government it will be! With the Lord as the Commander in Chief, there will be no need for legislators making laws. God’s Word will be the law of the land!

#### **Slide 30**

The Bible does not say a lot about what we will be doing during the eternal state but we can expect both the world we are in now and the Millennial Kingdom to foreshadow aspects of these eternal activities.

The Bible does say that we will see the face of God.

And that we will serve the Lord. This certainly means that we will be engaged in some sort of work.

#### **Slide 31**

The first seven verses of Revelation 21 describes a new world God will create for us. Note that we will not spend eternity in heaven but on earth. Heaven is where God is and God sets up His throne on earth...

#### **Slide 32**

*“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away...”*

#### **Slide 33**

*“And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.”*

#### **Slide 34**

*“And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying...”*

*“Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them.”*

#### **Slide 35**

*“And He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away. And He who sits on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” And He said, “Write, for these words are faithful and true.”*

#### **Slide 36**

*“And He said to me, “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.”*

#### **Slide 37**

Note that it says, *“He who **overcomes** shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.”*

The Bible define what an overcomer is in John 5:1 & 5 *“Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God... And who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”*

#### **Slide 38**

Our Christian hope is made even more blessed when we contrast it with the fate of the lost...

The lost will be held temporarily in Hades where the rich man complained, *“I am tormented in this flame”* (Luke 16:24).

Unbelievers will also be resurrected into an eternal body and then they will be judged. Acts 24:15 says, *“there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.”* Hebrews 9:27 says, *“it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.”*

Those who rejected the Savior in their mortal bodies will be cast into Hell...

...where they will be eternally separated from God. People who choose to live separated from God during their mortal lives and will spend eternity this way. Eternity is essentially a continuation of the state in which you leave this world. The fate of those who rejected the Son of God is summarized in Revelation 20:11-15...

#### **Slide 39**

This passage describes The Great White Throne Judgment...

*"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..."*

#### **Slide 40**

"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."

#### **Slide 41**

It is up to each person to decide if they will spend eternity in heaven or hell. Jesus has already made it possible for us to have our sins forgiven and have a personal relationship with Him. John 3:36 says, *"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."*

#### **Slide 42**

The Great Tribulation that precedes the Lord's return will be a terrible time of God pouring out His wrath as punishment for the sin of unbelief.

#### **Slide 43**

But God promises Grace for Believers. We have a future that will be wonderful beyond comprehension...

1 Corinthians 2:9 says, *"it is written: '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.'"*

#### **Slide 44**

This hope helps us endure the problems all of us face in this fallen world... Romans 8:18 says, *"I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us."*

#### **Slide 45**

Our Only Hope is in our Savior Jesus Christ who made it possible for us to spend eternity with Him by paying the penalty of our sins for us on the cross.