

Belief #10 **Heaven and Hell / The End-Times / Prophecy**

We believe in the literal, bodily return of Jesus Christ — first to rapture his Church, and then to return in glory to establish his kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of all people: the saved to eternal life in heaven in the presence of God, and the unsaved to eternal separation from God in hell. We hold the prophetic Scriptures in high regard, believing that the events of the end-times are real, imminent, and moving toward God's appointed conclusion.

Reason 1 Jesus promised to prepare a place — heaven is a real, eternal destination

On the night before his crucifixion, Jesus gave his disciples one of the most comforting promises in all of Scripture — that he was going ahead to prepare a place for them and would return to take them there. Heaven is a real, prepared dwelling where believers will live with God forever.

John 14:2–3

"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."

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Revelation 21:3–4

"God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them... 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."

New International Version (NIV)

Reason 2 Hell is real — a place of eternal separation from God for those who reject him

Jesus himself spoke about hell more than any other figure in Scripture — warning plainly of eternal fire and outer darkness. Hell is not annihilation but conscious, eternal separation from God's presence and blessing.

Matthew 25:41, 46

"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels'... Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

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2 Thessalonians 1:9

"They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might."

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Reason 3 The Rapture — Christ will catch up his Church before the great tribulation

Paul describes a sudden, glorious event in which the Lord himself will descend from heaven, the dead in Christ will rise first, and those who are alive will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. This “catching up” is the blessed hope of the Church.

1 Thessalonians 4:16–17

"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."

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1 Corinthians 15:51–52

"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."

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Reason 4 The Rapture is the blessed hope that calls believers to holy living

Titus calls the Rapture “the blessed hope” — the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. This living expectation of Christ’s return is meant to motivate purity, watchfulness, and joyful readiness.

Titus 2:13

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

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1 Thessalonians 4:13–14

"Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him."

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Reason 5 Jesus will return visibly, bodily, and in glory — every eye will see him

The Second Coming of Christ is not symbolic but literal and visible. Revelation describes every eye seeing him, and Acts records the angels' promise that Jesus would return in the same way he ascended.

Revelation 1:7

"Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all peoples on earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen."

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Acts 1:11

"Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

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Reason 6 At his return Christ will establish his kingdom and reign forever

The Second Coming is not the end of history but the beginning of its glorious consummation. Daniel and Revelation both describe Christ receiving an everlasting dominion — a kingdom that will never be destroyed.

Daniel 7:13–14

"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven... He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away."

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Philippians 2:10–11

"...that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

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Reason 7 Biblical prophecy is trustworthy — God's end-times purposes will be fulfilled

The prophetic Scriptures about the end-times are not allegory but divine revelation moving toward a certain and glorious conclusion. We are called to be watchful, ready, and hopeful.

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."

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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."

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Summary — Belief #10

- **Heaven is a real, eternal destination** — John 14:2–3 and Revelation 21:3–4 describe God dwelling with his people forever.
- **Hell is real — eternal separation from God** — Matthew 25:41, 46 and 2 Thessalonians 1:9 describe its solemn reality.
- **The Rapture — Christ catches up his Church** — 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 and 1 Corinthians 15:51–52 describe the event.
- **The Rapture is the blessed hope calling us to holy living** — Titus 2:13 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13–14 ground our hope in the resurrection.
- **Jesus will return visibly, bodily, and in glory** — Revelation 1:7 and Acts 1:11 confirm the literal Second Coming.
- **Christ will establish his everlasting kingdom** — Daniel 7:13–14 and Philippians 2:10–11 show every knee bowing to him.
- **Biblical prophecy is trustworthy and will be fulfilled** — Matthew 24:14 and 24:44 call us to readiness and watchfulness.