

What on Earth is Heaven? Class #3:

Rapture to Heaven—or Resurrected into New Creation?

KEY QUESTIONS concerning Heaven:

What *is eternal life* with God? **Where, who** and **what are we** throughout eternity, and **how/when/why** does all this come about? **How** will we spend eternity—and **who** will we be? We continue to answer these key questions by asking again:

As Christians, what exactly is our “*blessed hope*” in Christ?

Of two major ideas, which does the **Bible** say *it is*:

1. Escape the coming time of tribulation by the [secret] **rapture** of all the living righteous away from earth *into heaven* to join those who have already died in Christ, as Jewish evangelist offer those left last hope, *or*:
2. The final vindication of all who are “*asleep in the LORD*” by their **resurrection from the dead**, joining with Christ’s people still alive at Jesus’ return, and entering into the *new* (restored) *creation* of God, here *on earth*, on “*the day of the LORD*”—the day of Christ return?

Historical sketch of modern **Dispensationalism** and Its Concept of **Rapture**:

- **John Nelson Darby** and Plymouth Brethren (1840’s), developed:
- **Dispensationalism**: Israel-centric, prophetic ‘literalism’ (later adopted by Fundamentalism) in place of Christocentric prophetic interpretation.
- **Azusa Street Mission Revival** (birth of modern Pentecostalism)
- **Cyrus Scofield** (1843-1921) and the Scofield Study Bible (1909)
- Popularized and mainstreamed by Hal Lindsay: *Late, Great Planet Earth*; then Tim LaHaye’s fictionalized novels: *Left Behind!*

In the **New Testament**, **what** exactly is the reward or vindication/rescue of the Righteous (and exactly **when** is it coming)?

- Matthew 13:30-31; 39-43
- Matthew 19:28
- Matthew 25:31-35; 41
- Luke 14:14 (see Luke 20:34-39, noticing the point is the Resurrection)
- John 5:28-29

- Acts 17:31-32
- Romans 8:23-24
- 1 Corinthians 6:13b-14
- 1 Corinthians 15:21-23
- Philippians 3:20-21
- 2 Timothy 4:8
- 1 Thessalonians 4:16
- 2 Thessalonians 1:9-10
- Hebrews 9:27-28; **Titus 2:13-14**

The **Three Stages** of the Biblical doctrine of “*The Resurrection from the Dead*”:

1. **PAST: Jesus** (is “the firstfruits” of *the resurrected from the dead*): Romans 1:2-4; 6:8-10; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 20-22; Isaiah 53:11; Revelation 1:5. *We have been* **JUSTIFIED** by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
2. **PRESENT: Our current status** with God “*in Christ*”: 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:4,11; Ephesians 2:5-6 (see 1:13-14); Colossians 1:12-14; Revelation 5:9-10. *We are being* **SANCTIFIED** by the presence of God the Spirit in us even now, as we await:
3. **FUTURE: The final, visible, physical resurrection** from the dead of all “*in Christ*” on the great “*Day of the LORD*”: Isaiah 25:9; Malachi 4:1-3; Matthew 7:22; 25:31-34; Acts 17:31-32; Romans 2:5; 1 Corinthians 15:22-24; 2 Timothy 1:9-10; 2 Timothy 4:8; 2 Peter 3:7; Jude 6, 21. On that day, we will be **GLORIFIED with Christ** (Philippians 3:20-21; 2 Thessalonians 1:10; 1 Corinthians 3:13; Titus 2:13).

So, in terms of the Kingdom of God, *as Christ-followers*, we live:

- “**even now**” in our acceptance before God into His Kingdom *in Christ*, by the indwelling of His Spirit *in us* (Ephesians 1:13-14; 2:4-6; Romans 8:10-11; Colossians 1:12-14; Galatians 1:3-4).
- “**not yet**” in the full presence of God’s life *with us* and healing of us at the “restoration of all things” (Matthew 19:28; Acts 3:20-21; Rev 21:1-6).