

**What on Earth is Heaven? Class #4:
Resurrection of the Righteous into God's Kingdom**

What is eternal life with God? **Where, who** and **what are we** throughout eternity? **How** will we spend eternity—and **who** will we be? Tonight let's focus especially on **how and when** all this comes about? Next week on **who** we are in eternity.

In the **New Testament**, **what** is the final reward of the Righteous (and exactly **when** do they receive this reward)? These are NT *illustrative* texts:

- 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, 51-58.**
- **Philippians 3:20-21**
- **2 Timothy 4:8**
- **1 Thessalonians 4:16-18**
- **2 Thessalonians 1:9-10**
- **Hebrews 9:27-28; Titus 2:13-14**

So, according to Jesus/all the witnesses of the New Testament, our *final reward* and *physical entrance into eternal life* occurs at the **2nd coming of Jesus**.

During His ministry Jesus announced that *the Kingdom of God* was already present and at work **on earth** through what **He** was doing and teaching (e.g., Matthew 4:17, 23; 5:10; 6:10, 33; **Luke 11:20**); and then *His Kingdom* continued to expand on earth through the work of *His Church* (Matt. 24:14; Acts 1:3).

Jesus also made it clear that we must *individually* enter God's Kingdom **in this life**, a step that begins a whole new kind and quality of life. To experience this new life, Jesus taught that we must repent (turn away from sin to God), and be "reborn" or '*born again*' to enter into the Kingdom of God (**John 3:3-8**; 14-16).

We receive *our life in God's Kingdom* in three stages.

These three stages correspond exactly with the three stages found in the Biblical doctrine of **the Resurrection**:

1. **PAST: Jesus** (is the “*first-fruits*” of those resurrected from the dead): 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 20-22. We *have been* **JUSTIFIED** by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for us (Romans 4:24-5:2: DONE). So we *now* have His new (resurrected) life at work in us (Romans 6:8-10):
2. **PRESENT: Our current status** with God is “*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. “In Him” we possess the fullness of the Kingdom by faith, as we *are being* **SANCTIFIED** even now [ONGOING] by the presence of *God the Spirit in us*, as we await the:
3. **FUTURE:** The final, visible, physical *resurrection from the dead* of all those who are “*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 (COMPLETED: Philippians 3:20-21; 2 Thessalonians 1:10; 1 Corinthians 3:13).

In terms of the Kingdom of God, this means *as Christ-followers*, we live:

- “**even now**” with our acceptance before God into His Kingdom *in Christ*, as evidenced 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); but we are:
- “**not yet**” in the full presence of God, nor do we possess His life *with us*. That occurs at Christ’s return, which brings the eternal healing from all sin, disease, decay and death in us at the “*restoration of all things*” (Matthew 19:28; Acts 3:20-21; Rev 21:1-6).

QUESTION: What about Philippians 1:22-23 (24-26); and 2 Corinthians 5:1-6 (especially vs 1-3) and Jesus’ parable of Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31 (esp vs 22-23), the three sets of verses used to support the idea that the Christian’s reward and goal is to die and go to heaven? How do those relate to all the verses above?