

What on Earth is HEAVEN? Class #5:

Review and Eternal Life in the *Book of Revelation*.

Our life in God's Kingdom corresponds exactly with the three stages found in the Biblical doctrine of **the Resurrection**:

1. **PAST: Jesus** (is the “*first-fruits*” who guarantees our *resurrection from death*): 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 20-22. We are **JUSTIFIED** (right with God even now) by the death/resurrection of Jesus Christ for us (**Rom 4:24-5:2**): **[DONE]**.
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: we *now* have His new (*resurrected*) life at work in us (Romans 6:8-10). “*In Him*” we possess the fullness of the Kingdom as we *are being* **SANCTIFIED**: deprogrammed from selfishness, **[ONGOING]** by the presence of *God's Spirit in us*. Yet we still 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 [our transformation **COMPLETED**]: Philippians 3:20-21; 2 Thessalonians 1:10; 1 Cor. 3:13)

In terms of ‘the Kingdom of God’, we as Christians are:

- “**even now**” accepted by God into His Kingdom *in Christ*, as evidenced (guaranteed) by the indwelling of His Spirit *in us* (Ephesians 1:13-14; 2:4-6; Romans 8:10-11; Colossians 1:12-14; Hebrews 12:22-25). But we are:
- “**not yet**” in the full presence of God nor fully transformed. That occurs at Christ's return, who brings with Him eternal healing from all traces of sin, disease, decay and death in us. This occurs at the “*restoration of all things*” (Matthew 19:28; Acts 3:20-21; Rev 21:1-6).

Paradise is a Persian word that simply means ‘*the Garden*’ (implying the ideal garden = a place of abundant *provision, beauty, safety, simplicity and harmony* +

work! (Gardens take cultivation [stewardship] to remain fruitful and beautiful). The ideal Biblical **Paradise** is **Eden** (God's *original* [Genesis 2: "Paradise lost"] and God's *restored* [Revelation 21-22 = whole New Jerusalem is a vast garden]).

Thus, in Luke 23:43 Jesus tells the dying thief he will be with Him **in Paradise**, Jesus is literally saying "you will be with Me **in the Garden of Eden** (see John 20:17—where, on Sunday morning, Jesus says He has *not yet returned* to the Father). Jesus' agony is in a garden ("Gethsemane," Matthew 26:36) and Jesus dies, is buried and rises in a Garden (John 19:41). In the beginning, Paradise is *lost* in a Garden by the first Adam, then *won back* in a Garden by the 2nd Adam. In the end, the New Jerusalem is Paradise *finally restored* into the Garden City of God.

Revelation's Vision of 'Heaven' and Eternal Life

Revelation 2:7: "right to eat from **the Tree of Life which is in the Paradise [Garden] of God.**"

Revelation 3:11-13: "the New Jerusalem, which is **coming down out of heaven** from My God..."

Revelation 5:10: "You have made them to be a Kingdom and Priests to serve our God, and **they will reign on the earth.**"

Revelation 7:1-17: Then **I heard** (auditory = OT) the number...144,000; after this **I looked** (visual = NT) and saw a great multitude which no one could number..."

Revelation 11:18: "The time has come for judging the dead...and **for destroying those who destroy the earth.**"

Revelation 21:2-4: "I saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, **coming down out of heaven from God**, prepared as a Bride...Now the dwelling of God is with His people and He will live with them."

Revelation 21:9-10: "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb. He showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, **coming down out of heaven from God.**"

Revelation 21:11-27 = a city of twelves and symbols of intimacy and closeness, because the city is of "pure **gold, as pure** [transparent] **as glass**" 21:18, 21.

The key factor = **Revelation 21:27**.

The New Jerusalem is a = **Revelation 22:1-5**.

Revelation 7:14: "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." **Revelation 22:14:** "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the Tree of Life and go through the gates into the city."