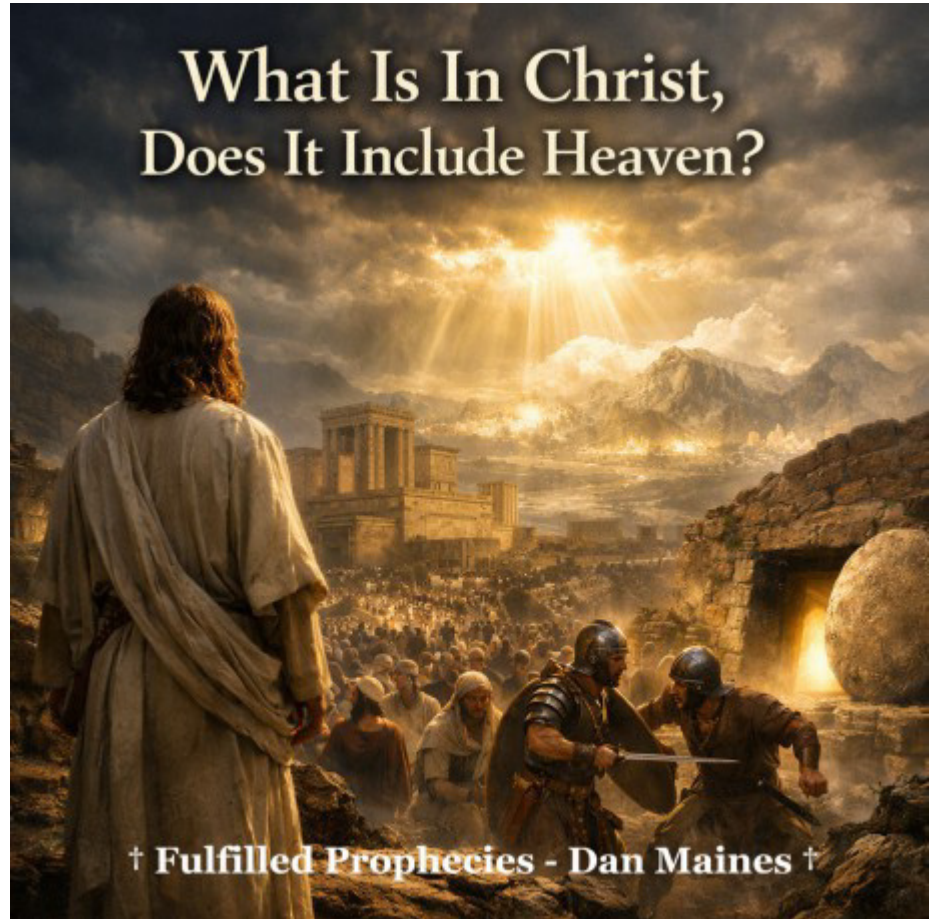


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**In Christ - What Is
In Christ, Does It
Include Heaven?**



By Dan Maines

What Is In Christ, Does It Include Heaven?

Introduction

† Most people think in terms of location, they think in terms of going somewhere after death, but the Bible consistently speaks in terms of being in Christ, not traveling to a place (2 Corinthians 5:6-8; Colossians 3:3).

† The confusion comes from trying to define spiritual reality with physical categories, we imagine distance, scenery, and

geography, but the New Testament keeps bringing us back to union, not relocation (Ephesians 2:5-6; John 14:20).

† If we don't define "in Christ" biblically, we'll keep asking the wrong questions, like what it looks like, where it is, or what kind of grass is there, instead of asking what it means to share His life (Philippians 1:23; Acts 17:28).

Acts 17:28

for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His descendants.'

† This reinforces that our entire existence is already in Him, not somewhere else we travel to later (Acts 17:28).

† If we already live and move in Him, then the spiritual realm cannot be a distant location (Acts 17:28; Colossians 3:3).

† This locks in the idea that "in Christ" is present reality, not future relocation (Ephesians 2:5-6; Acts 17:28).

2 Corinthians 5:6-8

Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord — for we walk by faith, not by sight— but we are of good courage and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

† Paul doesn't describe traveling to a location, he describes a change of relationship, from being absent from the Lord to

being at home with Him (2 Corinthians 5:6-8).

† Being at home with the Lord isn't about geography, it's about presence, it's about direct fellowship without the limitation of the flesh (2 Corinthians 5:6-8; Philippians 1:23).

† The contrast isn't earth versus heaven as locations, it's body versus presence, it's physical limitation versus full participation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:6-8; John 14:20).

Colossians 3:3

For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

† Our life is already hidden with Christ in God, that's present reality, not something that begins after death (Colossians 3:3).

† If our life is already there, then "going" somewhere isn't the point, it's the unveiling of what is already true (Colossians 3:3; Ephesians 2:5-6).

† This destroys the idea that heaven is a future destination, instead it shows union that already exists (Colossians 3:3; John 14:20).

Ephesians 2:5-6

even when we were dead in our wrongdoings, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,

† We've already been raised and seated with Him in the heavenly places, that's not future, that's present (Ephesians 2:5-6).

† If we're already seated with Him, then heaven cannot be reduced to a place we travel to later (Ephesians 2:5-6; Hebrews 12:22).

† "In Christ" is the location, but it's not physical space, it's covenant reality and shared life (Ephesians 2:5-6; John 14:20).

† If the heavenly places are where Christ is, and we are in Him, then heaven is not separate from Christ, it is defined by being in Him (Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 3:3).

† Heaven is not a destination outside of Christ, it is the reality of union with Him (John 14:20; Hebrews 12:22).

Philippians 1:23

But I am hard-pressed from both *directions*, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for *that* is very much better;

† Paul says being with Christ is far better, but he never defines it as scenery, environment, or physical landscape (Philippians 1:23).

† The "better" is Christ Himself, not surroundings, not physical pleasures, but direct, unhindered union (Philippians 1:23; Colossians 3:3).

† If Christ is the fullness, then nothing good is lost, everything good finds its source in Him (Colossians 2:9-10; Philippians 1:23).

Revelation 21:2-3

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among the people, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,

† The New Jerusalem isn't us going up, it's God dwelling with man, it's union, not relocation (Revelation 21:2-3).

† The focus is relationship, God with His people, not people escaping to another place (Revelation 21:3; John 14:20).

† This is fulfilled reality, the dwelling of God is with us, in Christ (Revelation 21:2-3; Ephesians 2:5-6).

1 Corinthians 15:44

it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual *body*.

† A spiritual body doesn't mean non-existent, it means a body governed by the Spirit, not limited by the flesh (1 Corinthians 15:44-46).

† Recognition isn't lost, identity isn't erased, it's transformed and brought into fullness (1 Corinthians 15:49; 1 John 3:2).

† The spiritual realm isn't less real, it's more real, because it's not subject to decay (1 Corinthians 15:42-44).

1 John 3:2

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

† This shows continuity of identity, we are already His children now, not becoming something unrelated later (1 John 3:2).

† Being like Him doesn't erase who we are, it completes what we are (1 John 3:2; 1 Corinthians 15:49).

† Recognition and awareness are assumed, not removed (1 John 3:2; Matthew 17:3-4).

John 14:20

On that day you will know that I *am* in My Father, and you *are* in Me, and I in you.

† Jesus defines everything in terms of union, in the Father, in Christ, Christ in us (John 14:20).

† This is the answer to what "in Christ" is, it's shared life, shared presence, shared identity (John 14:20; Colossians 3:3).

† It's not about where you are, it's about who you are in (John 14:20; Acts 17:28).

Hebrews 9:8-10

The Holy Spirit *is* signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed while the outer tabernacle is still

standing, which *is* a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience, since they *relate* only to food, drink, and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation.

† The shift wasn't from earth to another planet, it was from temple presence to indwelling presence, fulfilled in that generation (Hebrews 9:8-10; Revelation 21:3).

† The veil was removed, not so we could leave the earth, but so God could dwell fully with His people (Hebrews 10:19-22; Ephesians 2:18-22).

† This confirms the change was covenantal, not geographical (Hebrews 9:8-10; John 14:20).

† What people call heaven was never meant to be understood as distance, it was always about access to God (Hebrews 9:8).

† That access is now open in Christ, which means heaven is not somewhere else, it is where God dwells with His people (Revelation 21:3; Ephesians 2:18).

Historical References

† Irenaeus spoke of the believer's life as participation in God, not escape to another world, emphasizing union over location (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book 5).

† Athanasius taught that God became man so that man might share in the life of God, again pointing to union, not geography (Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*).

† Augustine described the kingdom of God as present within, not something reached by travel, but realized in relationship (Augustine, City of God).

† Josephus records the destruction of Jerusalem, confirming the fulfillment of covenant transition, where the dwelling of God moved from temple to people (Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book 6).

How it applies to us today

† We don't lose anything God called good, we gain its source, everything good comes from Him, and in Christ we have fullness (James 1:17; Colossians 2:9-10).

† We don't need to imagine a physical paradise to find comfort, Christ Himself is the fulfillment of every good thing (Philippians 1:23; Colossians 3:3).

† When we understand we're already in Christ, fear of death changes, it's not about going somewhere unknown, it's stepping into what we've already been joined to (2 Corinthians 5:6-8; John 14:20).

† Our identity, relationships, and awareness aren't erased, they're fulfilled in Him, not diminished (1 Corinthians 15:49; 1 John 3:2).

† We're not waiting to enter heaven, we're already in the One who defines it (Colossians 3:3; Hebrews 12:22).

† Understanding that changes everything, because it shifts our focus from going somewhere later to living in Him now (Acts 17:28; John 14:20).

Q & A Appendix

Q If heaven isn't a place, how can it be better than earth?

A Because the "better" is being fully with Christ, not the environment. Philippians 1:23 shows the focus is Christ Himself, not surroundings.

Q Will we recognize each other?

A Yes, identity isn't destroyed, it's transformed. 1 Corinthians 15:49 and 1 John 3:2 show continuity, not loss.

Q Are we already in the New Jerusalem?

A Yes, Hebrews 12:22 says we have come to Mount Zion and the city of the living God, showing present reality.

Q Do we lose the beauty of creation?

A No, all beauty comes from God, and in Christ we have the fullness of what those things pointed to. Romans 8:18 shows present glory surpasses former things.

Q Where is the spiritual realm?

A The Bible never places the spiritual realm on a map, it defines it by relationship, not location. The spiritual realm isn't somewhere out there, it's in Christ. Ephesians 2:6 says we are already seated in the heavenly places in Christ, showing it's present reality. Colossians 3:3 says your life is hidden with Christ in God, meaning it's already true now. Jesus said in John 14:20, you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you, which defines the spiritual realm as union. Hebrews 12:22 says you have come to Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, not you will come. So the spiritual realm is where Christ is, and because we're in Him, it's not measured by distance or space. It isn't above us or far away, it's the realm of God's presence that we're already in. That is why we walk by

faith and not by sight, because it's real but not seen with physical eyes.

Q If everything is in Christ is it a whole new world that may seem as though it were physical?

A Yes, but not in the way people imagine. It isn't a recreated physical planet with geography and scenery, it is a fulfilled reality where everything that was physical now has its true substance in Christ. Colossians 2:17 shows the physical things were a shadow, but the substance belongs to Christ. That means what we experience in Him isn't less real, it is more real. 1 Corinthians 15:44 shows there is a spiritual body, meaning real existence, not imaginary, but governed by the Spirit instead of the flesh. So it can feel fully real and aware, yet it isn't bound to physical limitations. Hebrews 12:22 shows we have already come into that reality now, not later. So it isn't a new world in location, it is a new kind of existence in Christ that fulfills everything the physical world pointed to.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Acts 17:28; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8; Colossians 2:9-10; Colossians 3:3; Ephesians 2:5-6, 18-22; Philippians 1:23; Revelation 21:2-3; 1 Corinthians 15:42-49; 1 John 3:2; John 14:20; Hebrews 9:8-10; Hebrews 10:19-22; Hebrews 12:22; James 1:17; Matthew 17:3-4; Romans 8:18

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Book 5; Athanasius, On the Incarnation; Augustine, City of God; Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book 6

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