

THE EARTHLY INHERITANCE SERIES OF BIBLE SUBJECTS

Various Bible study guides in subjects pertaining to New Earth prophecy, as taught by Paul Phelps

For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, **they shall inherit the earth.** Psalm 37:9

The RESURRECTION of the RIGHTEOUS

Bible quotes are from the **New Revised Standard Version** except for my own translations or as otherwise indicated.

A Bible study thesis that expounds God's plan for mankind to gain entry into His Kingdom on earth.

A Bible study project by Paul Phelps
After several years of study this writing was completed in 2000.

The Bible assures future resurrections both in heaven and earth. Apostle Paul taught the heavenly resurrection hope of the Church (which was his calling) and he also acknowledged the earthly resurrection hope of the Jews.

Acts 23:6,

When Paul noticed that some were Sadducees and others were Pharisees, he called out in the council, 'Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees.

I am on trial concerning the hope of the **resurrection of the dead.**'

Acts 24:14-15,

But this I admit to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our ancestors, believing everything laid down according to the law or written in the prophets. I have a hope in God—a hope that they themselves also accept—that there will be a **resurrection of the dead**, both of the righteous and the unrighteous.

As we study the Law and the Prophets (Old Testament texts), we find that Jews have always believed in a resurrection of the dead for the whole world, and that the righteous will rise in earthly bodies **from the start** of the Messianic Kingdom.

When Abraham obeyed God to sacrifice his son (Gen. 22; Hebrews 11:17-19), he had resurrection hope. The Bible's first hint of resurrection is in Deut. 32:39; God says, "I kill and I make alive." Hannah's prayer reveals that God intends to raise people from the grave. "The LORD kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up" (1 Sam. 2:6). In this text and more places, SHEOL means 'the realm of dead souls' or 'underworld.' This means that at death, men's souls descend into **Sheol**, and that God will someday raise them up. Psalm 49:15 says,

“But God will ransom my soul from the power of *Sheol*, for he will receive me.”
This hope is taught in Job 14:10-13,

But mortals die, and are laid low; humans expire, and where are they?
As waters fail from a lake, and a river wastes away and dries up, so
mortals lie down and do not rise again; until the heavens are no more,
they will not awake or be roused out of their sleep. Oh that you would
hide me in Sheol, that you would conceal me until your wrath is past,
that you would appoint me a set time, and remember me!

Therefore the concealment in Sheol is a *sleep*— from which we are not raised until the appointed time. Jesus said death is a sleep (Luke 8:52-55; Jn. 11:11-14). The soul is sleeping (not the body). Every human soul asleep in Sheol is waiting for the appointed time to rise to life. Isaiah 26:19,

Your dead shall live, their corpses shall rise. O dwellers in the dust,
awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a radiant dew,
and the earth will give birth to those long dead.

The resurrection of the righteous dead to new life in earth will be the dawn of a new day! The souls of the sleeping dead will awaken with *new bodies* that are compared to morning dewdrops. This resurrection happens after Christ returns for his earthly kingdom. Jesus is like the sunrise of earth’s new day. He returns in power with his glorified saints—and then the ‘resurrection dewdrops’ appear. Psalm 110:3, Your people will offer themselves willingly on the day you lead your forces in holy splendour.
From the **womb of the morning**, the dew of your youth will come to you.

In prophecy texts, ‘*morning*’ is the start of the earthly kingdom at Jesus’ return. The womb of the morning is the **earth** because the world resurrection is in earth. Psalm 139 shows this. Verses 1-6 refer to this present life. Verses 7-12 speak of death, the soul waiting in Sheol, inside earth. Verses 13-18 refer to resurrection of new physical bodies into the New Earth at the start of the Kingdom. Therefore the ‘**womb of the morning**’ is the earth, where God creates resurrection bodies. Notice that the creation of bodies inside the earth is **after** the death wait in Sheol. Psalm 139:13,

For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother’s **womb**.
v 15 My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth. (See also v 18)

Job 19:25-27,
For I know that my Redeemer lives,
and that at the last **he will stand upon the earth**; and
after my skin has been thus destroyed, then in my flesh I shall see God,
whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.

God is a Spirit and not usually seen by earthmen (Jn. 4:24; 1 Jn. 4:12), but in a renewed flesh body Job will see God, because Jesus will be God on earth in the Kingdom. Job represents those of upright conscience; “Let me die the death of the upright, and let my end be like his!” (Num. 23:10). King David is with those

who will awaken on earth for David did not go to heaven nor will he (Acts 2:34). David will return as King of Israel (Jer. 30:9; 33:17-22; Eze. 34:23-24; Hosea 3:5). **The upright and meek will inherit earth** when Jesus the Prince of Peace returns. Psalm 37:11, Matt. 5:5, “**Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.**”

Jesus’ sermon on righteousness (Matt. 5–7) was to the public crowd; he taught the public in parables—but he later explained the hidden meanings privately to his disciples—telling them plainly about the call to heaven. Mark 4:10-11, 33-34,

v 10... When he was alone, those who were around him along with the twelve asked him about the parables. And he said to them, “To you has been given to know the secret mystery of the kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything comes in parables’...

v 33... With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything to his disciples.

Therefore the New covenant has two kinds of life provision, heaven and earth. Why else did Jesus preach to crowds? His public ministry had purpose because he continued speaking to them and forgave their sins. Righteousness is for the public masses and promises an earthly resurrection for the world. But the call to follow Jesus by faith in “a new and living way” promises resurrection **to heaven**.

This world is going away (1 Cor. 7:31; 1 John 2:17), but a new world is coming. Isaiah 65:17, I am about to create a **new heavens** and a **new earth**...

Isaiah 66:22, For as the **new heavens** and the **new earth**,
which I will make, shall remain before me, says the LORD,
so shall your descendants and your name remain.

Apostle Paul said little about earthly inheritance because his work was for the Church call, but an earthly inheritance is shown in some New Testament verses. 2 Peter 3:13,

But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new **heavens**
and a new **earth**, where righteousness is at home.

Rev. 21:1,

Then I saw a new **heaven** and a new **earth**;
for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...

God made a plan for “the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things **in heaven** and things **on earth**” (Eph. 1:10). Jesus prayed for both, in Matt. 6:10, “Your kingdom come. Your will be done, **on earth** as it is **in heaven**.”

Eph. 3:14-15,

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,
from whom every family **in heaven** and **on earth** takes its name.

Jesus paid the price to redeem mankind, and salvation is now available to all. The time from Jesus’ first advent until his return is called ‘*the Church age*,’ when people are being called to heaven. This is the time for choosing the **special few** who are ready to follow Jesus by faith. “We have our hope set on the living God, who is the Saviour of all people, **especially of those who believe**” (1 Tim. 4:10).

At his return, it will be the fullness of time to fulfil earthly kingdom prophecies; (Isaiah 11:1-10; 35:1-10; 65:17-25), and to draw all people to himself (John 12:32). The Bible has hope for those not yet following Christ, but who have good works. He gave resurrection hope to an unbelieving Pharisee. Luke 14:12-14,

He said also to the one who had invited him, 'When you give a luncheon or a supper, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbours, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, **for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.**'

The Pharisee host of this banquet was not a believer—but according to Jesus own words, good works shall be rewarded **at the resurrection of the righteous**. This is the righteousness of good works, as Jesus promised in Matt. 10:40-42,

'Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person **will receive the reward of the righteous**; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, **none of these will lose their reward.**'

The words of Jesus never end (Matt. 24:35) **and he is the Judge**; Matt. 25:31...

v 31... When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations* will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.

Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me."

vv 37-40,

Then **the righteous** will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me."

**races or nationalities (the whole world)*

This judgment follows Jesus' return to earth as King and all the people of earth alive or dead are then judged. And everyone judged righteous because of their

good works can enter in God's earthly kingdom (v 46) that leads to renewed life.
2 Tim. 4:1 (NKJ),

I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ,
who will judge the living and the dead
at his appearing and his kingdom...

Christian saints are not in this judgment for they are in glory and coming with Jesus at his return. "**Jesus' brothers**" are **his followers**, who do the Father's will, (Matt. 12:48-50; Mark 3:33-35), who were called to follow Jesus. They all will be around the throne of Jesus at his return. The people judged are the world public, the masses of mankind. Christian saints are not being judged because they are separate from the world and are already assured of salvation in this lifetime **now**; (John 5:24; Romans 8:1-2).

Judgment-day divides the world in two parts, the '*righteous*' and '*unrighteous*,' (the sheep and goats of Matthew 25:31-46). Resurrection follows this judgment.
John 5:25-29,

Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming, and is now here,
when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God,
and those who hear will live.

For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted
the Son also to have life in himself; and he has given him
authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.

Do not be astonished at this; for the hour is coming when
all who are in their graves will hear his voice and will come out—
those who have done good, to the **resurrection of life**,
and those who have done evil, to the **resurrection of condemnation**.

This judgment and resurrection is the same as in Matt. 25:31-46. Christians are not included because Christians are saved by grace, not works (Eph. 2:8-9). But '**those who have done good**' (*yet unsaved*) are like the Pharisee of Luke 14:12-14. Those who have good works to their credit will hear Jesus' voice and rise in the "**resurrection of life**" (*Jn. 5:29 text*), to inherit life in God's earthly kingdom.

This all happens during Christ's earthly rule after his return. The sheep-and-goat analogy is hopeful because Asian herds often have more sheep than goats. The judgment-day contains mercy because Jesus will be accepting good works as tokens of a right heart—and will receive people to his kingdom based on that.

The meek and righteous people of earth will inherit the earth (Psalm 37:9,11), but the wicked will be cursed and killed. Psalm 37:22,29,

v 22, ... for those blessed by the LORD shall inherit the land;
but those cursed by him shall be cut off.

v 29, The **righteous** shall inherit the land, and live in it forever.

Isaiah 60:21,

Your people shall all be **righteous**; they shall possess the land forever.

The wicked are cursed, and afterward will be cast into the lake of eternal fire. Matthew 25:41,46,

v 41, Then he will say to those at his left hand,
‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels’...
v 46, And these will go away into eternal punishment,
but the righteous into eternal life.

People of good conscience, though imperfect now will be accepted—because God will reward good works at the resurrection of the righteous (Luke 14:12-14). The works determine the reward. Psalm 62:12,

For you repay to all **according to their work**.

Prov. 20:11,

Even children make themselves known **by their acts**,
by whether what they do is pure and right.

Prov. 24:12,

If you say, ‘Look, we did not know this’—
does not he who weighs the heart perceive it?
Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it?
And will he not repay all **according to their deeds**?

Jer. 17:10,

I the LORD test the mind and search the heart, to give all
according to their ways, according to the fruit of their doings.

Matt. 16:27,

For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father,
and then he will repay everyone **for what has been done**.

Acts 10:35,

... anyone who fears him and **does what is right** is acceptable to him.

Rev. 22:12,

‘See, I am coming soon; my reward is with me,
to repay **according to everyone’s work**.’

For anyone to be judged righteous, God expects some evidence of goodness; childlike innocence, wisdom of goodness, godly fear and repentance from sins, a conscience of meekness and love of righteousness—all this is pleasing to God.

Isaiah 56:1,

Thus says the LORD: “**Maintain justice, and do what is right**,
for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed.”

This world is not perfect; the good deeds or innocence of this lifetime cannot fulfil all righteousness, **but there is promise of resurrection in God’s kingdom**. God is a judge of this world (Ps. 9:7-8), but he is also a teacher of righteousness for his earthly children in the next world (Ps. 25:4,8; 32:8; Isa. 30:20-21; 54:13). Good deeds are ‘*seeds of righteousness*’ that grow to maturity in the New Earth, just as faith in Jesus is ‘*seed faith*’ for Christian saints in preparation for heaven. God will not judge his earthly people by written law only, but also by the spirit. He has promised to fulfil the desire for righteousness; Matthew 5:6,

‘Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,

for they will be filled.'

In God's sight no one has perfect righteousness, (for even angels are not fully righteous; Job 4:18; 15:14-16; 25:4-6). But **Christ's death is payment for all sins.**
1 John 2:1-2,

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if any one does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only **but also for the sins of the whole world.**

In John 3:36, the "wrath" on unbelievers is God's judgment on this world—this lifetime, that Job was hiding from while asleep in the grave. Job 14:13-17,

O that you would hide me in Sheol, that you would conceal me **until your wrath is past,** that you would appoint me a set time, and remember me! If mortals die, will they live again?

All the days of my service I would wait **until my release should come.** You would call, and I would answer you; you would long for the work of your hands. For then you would not number my steps, you would not keep watch over my sin; my transgression would be sealed up in a bag, and you would cover over my iniquity.

The wrath of this lifetime will not continue to the next world; it is God's *mercy* that endures forever (Psalm 136). Micah 7:18,

Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity, and passing over the transgression of the remnant of his possession? He does not retain his anger for ever, because he delights in showing clemency. He will again have compassion upon us; he will tread our iniquities under foot. You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

Isaiah 64:9,

Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD, and do not remember iniquity for ever. Now consider, we are all your people.

Isaiah 12:1,

You will say on that day: I will give thanks to you, O LORD; though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, and you comforted me.

Jesus comforted people in their loss and forgave sin freely with no condition. Jesus is the sacrifice lamb for all sin; he gave assurance to everyone that all sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven (Matt. 12:31). Mark 3:28,

Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter ...

This says that men will be entirely free of sin when they enter the next world because Jesus' death on the cross cancels the sin debt for everyone. Therefore everyone has resurrection rights and everyone will be resurrected in their time. But in Matthew 25:31-46 we see that **people will require good deeds** to be in the resurrection of the righteous. Good deeds serve as tokens of a righteous heart. Judgment-day determines who is accepted for the resurrection of the righteous;

or who is cursed and left waiting till the end, the resurrection of the unrighteous. **Resurrection is the hope of the righteous.** Psalm 17:15,

As for me, I shall behold your face **in righteousness**;
when I awake **I shall be satisfied**, beholding your likeness.

It is well for us to consider “the rich man in torment” as an illustration, as told in Luke 16:19-31. **No sins of any kind** were accounted, either for the rich man or the poor man (Lazarus), **and no question was raised about religious belief**. Yet the poor man went into paradise but the rich man went into torment of soul. This is a view of the righteous and wicked asleep in Sheol (Gr. HÁDES), waiting for the judgment and resurrection. The Bible talks of God’s love and regard for the poor; he regards patient endurance of suffering and poverty as a good deed. In this story the rich man did not give the poor man help—so this opportunity of doing a good deed was lost. The lesson here is that the rich man (someone in position to help) **did not help**—and the point is, *he had no good deed to his credit*. This then is why his soul was in torment instead of resting in paradise.

This story is fully Jewish in character. Jesus gives the example of a rich man, of Jewish culture in Israel, and puts the moral obligation upon his obedience to *Jewish law*, to Moses and the Prophets; Luke 16:29-31. These Scriptures obligate the rich to help poor and disinherited people in need, and the fulfilment of this is **a good deed**. In regard to this concept the world is in obligation to **conscience**; (Romans 2:14-16,26-27). Jesus requires nothing more; he did not make religious belief a requirement. For men to be upright or wicked, in paradise or torment, depends upon **good deeds**. Even simple friendship gestures will be rewarded. Mark 9:38-41,

John said to him, ‘Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.’
But Jesus said, ‘Do not stop him, for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterwards to speak evil of me.
Whoever is not against us is for us. For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.’

We can all learn a lesson from considering John’s attitude, so that we may not fall into this same error. John thought that anyone who does not follow Jesus will have no reward, as some think today. **But Jesus did not agree!** Jesus promised reward for every person who has good deeds.

Jews always had resurrection hope. After Lazarus’ death, Martha said to Jesus, **“I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day”** (John 11:24). Jesus fulfilled her hope when he raised Lazarus to life, because Jews believed in **physical earthly resurrection**; (*at that time there was no teaching about heaven*). This resurrection restored Lazarus’ earthly life as a man in the flesh (Jn. 11:42-44) and in fact **all** resurrections done by Jesus restored flesh bodies. This affirmed **the earthly resurrection doctrine** because the resurrections performed by Jesus express truth the same as his words. Some may wonder how Martha knew about

“the resurrection on the last day;”—it’s because she knew about Ezekiel’s vision in Chapter 37, (vv 7-10 quoted),

So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, ‘Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.’ I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

(the Hebrew word RÙAKH can be *wind, spirit, or breath*)

The rule of literal Bible interpretation whenever possible means that the vision is teaching an earthly resurrection of the whole house of Israel from their graves. In fact, this vision is for all the dead everywhere on earth; ***the vision is universal.***

Apostle Paul said the world resurrection is when God accepts Israel’s people. Rom. 11:15,

For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the **world**,
what will their acceptance be but **life from the dead!**

He was not referring to the resurrection of Christians, for they will already be in heaven **before** Israel’s national repentance (and will also be **returning** with Jesus at his return; Zech. 14:5). In Rom. 11:15, he was referring to the resurrection of **the whole world. Everyone** meets Jesus in the resurrection (Psa. 17:15), which is the main reason why **all** will know him then (see Jer. 31:34).

Eze. 37:13,

And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves,
and bring you up from your graves, O my people.

Ancient nations long dead will be restored in the Kingdom. Ezekiel 16:55,

As for your sisters, **Sodom and her daughters** shall return to their former state, Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former state, and you and your daughters shall return to your former state.

Matt. 11:24,

But I tell you that on the day of judgment it will be
more tolerable for the land of **Sodom** than for you.

Luke 11:31,32,

v 31, The queen of the South will rise at the judgment with
the people of this generation and condemn them, because
she came from the ends of the earth to listen to the wisdom of Solomon...

v 32, The people of **Nineveh** will rise up at the judgment with this generation
and condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah ...

Christian saints are promised spiritual resurrection. Their new bodies will be made for heaven, like Jesus after he resurrected (1 Jn. 3:2). The heavenly bodies for Christian saints are part of the new birth Church covenant. They will awaken in bodies like the risen Christ. But resurrections are planned for people in both

heavenly and earthly destinies; the world resurrection will be in earthly bodies.
1 Cor. 15:48,

As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust;
and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven.

The Church call is separate from the world and the Church resurrection also is separate from the world resurrection. Paul's main focus was the Church, and their **heavenly** resurrection (Jn. 6:40,44,47,54; 1 Cor. 15:50-55; 1 Thes. 4:14-18). God will provide a body that best fits each person's place in the Kingdom.
1 Cor. 15:37-41,

And as for what you sow, you do not sow that body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of **some other grain**. But God gives it **a body as he has chosen**, and to each kind of seed its own body.

Not all flesh is alike, but there is one flesh for human beings, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish.

There are both heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the **heavenly** is one thing, and that of the **earthly** is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; indeed, star differs from star in glory.

Paul speaks of glory in reference to earthly and heavenly bodies because he is teaching on resurrection bodies; he refers to heavenly bodies for the Church in vv 42-58, —saying that flesh and blood bodies will not be in heaven because they are perishable (1 Cor. 15:49-50). Nevertheless, in the world to come, God will provide an earthly environment for flesh bodies just as he did in this world. At this present time earth bodies are perishable, but the New Earth flesh bodies will endure forever. Isaiah 25:8,

... **he will swallow up death for ever**. Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.

Resurrection is one of the "**basic elements**" of Bible teaching (Heb. 5:11-6:2). Because we are teaching world resurrection **we have become that 'someone' to teach again this foundation doctrine**. Resurrection is central for understanding God's purpose for mankind— "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic elements of the oracles of God." (Heb. 5:12). A preview of the world resurrection is in Matthew 27:52-53,

The tombs also were opened,
and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised.
After his resurrection they came out of the tombs
and entered the holy city and appeared to many.

That resurrection was a preview for the world resurrection at Christ's return. Those saints were resurrected in **earthly physical bodies**—like they had before. This was an early example of the world resurrection that Jesus will perform at his return to earth; it is proof that his death on the cross **provides life for the world**.