

Is Rapture Teaching Robbing You of Your Destiny?

From my childhood, I've heard fervent declarations about going to heaven. In our little church we often sang about it, reflecting on it virtually every time we gathered on a Sunday morning. This was a significant aspect of my Pentecostal identity and heritage in Northwest Arkansas.

From the rollicking musical interludes of "I'll Fly Away," to the earnest testimonies about what was going to happen "when the trumpet sounded," those who sat next to me in the pew were waiting for the day when they could fly off this "dreadful planet" and reside "just beyond the river Jordan."

In a lot of ways, mindsets haven't changed much in forty years. In several Pentecostal and Charismatic churches that I've visited, there's still talk about heaven being our "home." Multitudes have their "rapture bags" packed and ready, eagerly awaiting the evacuation of earth.

I understand why so many Christians think like this. For at least a hundred years, this teaching has been highlighted in Evangelical and Pentecostal Churches. No one bothered to tell our spiritual forefathers that C.I. Scofield's notes weren't equivalent to the Bible. All they ever heard about was an exit strategy.

Now, as I actively read my Bible, I'm not sure that the intent is for believers to go to another place. In fact, many passages suggest that God designed us to govern here on earth. I was specifically reminded of this the other day when I came across a passage from the Psalms which reads:

"The heavens are the heavens of the Lord, but the earth He has given to the children of men" (Psalm 115:16).

While humanity rightfully longs for the glories of the

heavenly realm, God has actually called us to express who He is here in the lower earthly realms.

Heaven is certainly the abode of God and the source of humanity's spiritual identity. Nevertheless, the focus of Lord's work of redemption is here on Earth.

It would be a tragedy if Christians neglected our real sphere of responsibility because of a misdirected emphasis. What if ongoing distractions are keeping us from the destiny that God has called us to embody?

I'm asking you to look beyond the traditions of men and actually embrace the intent of Scripture. Whatever you do, don't relinquish your inheritance.

*While pursuing a bible college degree, **J.D. King** was impacted by the ministry of Steve Gray at the revival in Smithton, Missouri. With a transformed heart and undying passion for the local church, King was asked to serve as the International Director of World Revival Network of Ministries in 1999. As a speaker, church consultant and author, he has brought encouragement and assistance to a multitude of congregations. J.D. is currently working on a lengthy book, "Regeneration: Healing in the History of Christianity."*