

WHEN HUMANS PASS INTO THE NEXT LIFE

- As people are awaiting (whether they are aware of it or not) the final consummation of the world, they are passing from this life to the next.
- Since the end of the age has not taken place, the actual resurrection of people's bodies has not taken place, where do they go as they are waiting for their final, eternal destination?
- In other words, while our bodies are still in the ground waiting for their resurrection, where are our souls?

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE BEFORE GLORIFICATION

- All people, upon death in this world will either go to a place of joy or a place of torment. Each person awaits their body's resurrection and final destination.

When Unbelievers Die

- When unbelievers die in this world, their bodies remain in the ground, and their souls are transported to a place called Hades.
- Hades is a temporary place of conscious torment for those who have rejected the gospel.
- **Revelation 20:13** “And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.”
- This is the place of the wicked before their final judgment before God.
- “The most explicit discussion of hades is found in Luke 16:19–31, the account of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man, who was clothed in luxury, had little concern for the poor beggar Lazarus. When the rich man died, his body was buried (16:22); yet his immaterial part was relocated to hades, where he was “in torment” (16:23). He called out to Abraham for mercy, saying, “I am in anguish in this flame” (16:24). The rich man was in agony. He also had memory, not only recalling Abraham and Lazarus but also desiring to help his five living brothers. He was aware that his presence in hades was deserved. Abraham also appealed to the rich man's memory: “Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus ... bad things” (16:25). All these details reveal a place of torment with self-consciousness and memory.”¹
- Although this is possibly just a parable, the Lord designed it to explain an actual post death circumstance.

When Believers Die

- When believer's die, God completes their sanctification. He makes them perfectly holy, removes their sin, and they are in the state of perfect sanctification.

¹ MacArthur and Mayhue, eds., *Biblical Doctrine*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 839–840.

- They have finished their race, but their complete salvation has not been accomplished since they are still without their glorified bodies.
- It is at this stage in redemption that the believer is in the intermediate state, between their temporary earthly home and their permanent heavenly home.
- The believer's soul goes to be with the Lord while their body stays in the ground until the resurrection.
- The Bible does not teach nor support the teachings of purgatory or soul sleep.
- Instead, it is abundantly clear from the Bible that believer's souls are *immediately* with the Lord when the believer dies.
- "The intermediate destiny of the believer differs drastically from that of the unbeliever. It involves a conscious, peaceful existence in heaven with Jesus between physical death and the resurrection of the body. The believer's soul is translated immediately to the presence of Jesus in heaven upon physical death."²
- **2 Corinthians 5:8** "...we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord."
- **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..."
- **Luke 23:43** "And He said to him, 'Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.'"
- **Acts 7:59** "They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!'"
- **What about the Old Testament saints?**
- It would appear that the OT saints enjoyed the blessings of the Lord upon their death...just like those who die in the church age.
- **2 Kings 2:11** "As they were going along and talking, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven."
- **Psalms 23:6** "Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever."
- **Matthew 17:3** "And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him."
- **Matthew 22:32** "I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB"? He is not the God of the dead but of the living."
- This means that for believers who die before Christ's return, their soul is immediately with the Lord in heaven, but their bodies remain buried in the earth as they await their final redemption.
- *We can confidently say that the intermediate state is not the same as our glorified state.*

² MacArthur and Mayhue, eds., *Biblical Doctrine*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 840.

- “...however glorious is the transformation of the people of God at death and however much they may be disposed to say with the apostle that to depart and to be with Christ is far better (*cf.* Phil. 1:23), this is not their glorification. It is not the goal of the believer’s hope and expectation. The redemption which Christ has secured for his people is redemption not only from sin but also from all its consequences.”³
- There is no doubt that the intermediate state is going to be joyous. There will be freedom from sin, freedom from the effects of sin, and living in the presence of the Jesus.
- But, we will still be waiting for our final, perfected, glorified bodies.
- We are not designed to live forever in the disembodied state...this means that there is an expectation that we will still have as we await a reunion with our bodies.
- **2 Corinthians 5:4** “For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.”

Why the intermediate state?⁴

- “What role does the intermediate state play in God’s broader cosmic plans? The souls of unbelievers are in hades. The souls of departed saints and the resurrected Jesus are in heaven. So the intermediate state is vitally important in God’s plans. Yet one should avoid extremes concerning the intermediate state’s significance.”
- The intermediate state is not the new heaven or the final resting place for believers. Believers are awaiting the new heavens.
- **2 Peter 3:13** “But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.”
- This is also not the Millennial reign of Jesus, as the intermediate state takes place in heaven, not on earth.
- “The intermediate state is for deceased believers in heaven or unbelievers in hades during this age before the second coming of Jesus and the resurrection of the body. But it is not the final state or destiny for human beings.”

GLORIFICATION OF THE SAINTS

- “It should be easy to see from this that our Christian hope should be a cause of great joy and happiness! As we consider and look forward to our future with Christ, our hearts will become very excited – thus giving us joy and happiness during our stay upon the earth.”⁵

³ Murray, *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied*, 174–175.

⁴ This section taken from John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, eds., *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 841-842.

⁵ <https://www.monergism.com/great-christian-hope-glorification>

- **Romans 5:2** "...through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God."
- **Hebrews 6:19** "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil..."
- **1 Peter 1:13** "Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."
- Why is this hope of eternal life with Christ so important? It is our motivation for living for Christ, for enduring life's trials, for fighting off spiritual depression, for killing sin, and for just living every day with our eyes on the truth of the future.
- "The resurrection of the body is the consummation of our salvation, as the Spirit applies to completion the redemption that the Father planned and that Christ purchased. Romans 8:30 features glorification as the climax of redemption: 'And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also *glorified*.'"⁶
- "Glorification is the radical transformation of both the body and the soul of believers, perfecting them in holiness, and thereby fitting them for eternal life on the new earth in perfect communion with the triune God."⁷
- "[Glorification is] the complete and final redemption of the whole person, when in the integrity of body and spirit, the people of God will be conformed to the image of the risen, exalted, and glorified Redeemer, when the very body of their humiliation will be conformed to the body of Christ's glory."⁸
- Since there is going to be a new heavens and earth, we need to have a new body to be there. The completed Christian in their final state is their redeemed body, free from sin and temptation, in the new heavens and earth living for eternity with Jesus.

When does our glorification take place?

- Paul comforted the believers in Thessalonica who thought their deceased brothers and sisters in Christ had missed the resurrection.
- **1 Thessalonians 4:13-17** "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. {14} For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. {15} For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede

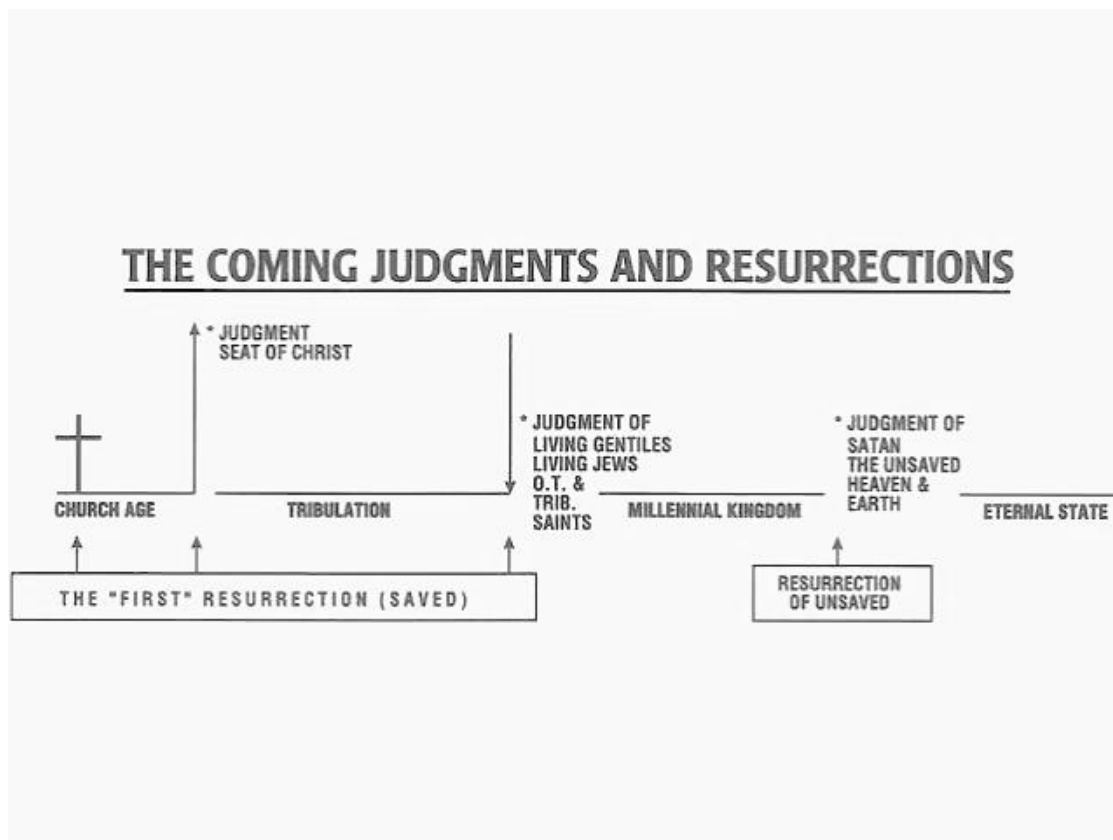
⁶ MacArthur, 654.

⁷ Ibid. 654.

⁸ Murray, 175.

those who have fallen asleep. {16} For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. {17} Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.”

- When Christ returns at the rapture (v. 16), God will reunite the disembodied spirits of the deceased believer with brand new, glorified, immortal bodies.
- After the dead have been resurrected, then living believers on earth have their mortal bodies instantly transformed into immortal, glorified bodies (v. 17).
- Both groups then meet in the air and are with Christ in the heavenlies.
- Those who are dead in Christ and those alive at His coming will be glorified in the twinkling of an eye when Jesus comes back.
- **1 Corinthians 15:51-53** “Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, {52} in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. {53} For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.”



- The “first” resurrection from **Revelation 20:5** refers to a category of resurrected people rather than a chronological order. It is not a sequence of events but a kind or type of people...the saved.
- Only believers are resurrected in the “first” resurrection and it has multiple phases.
 - Christ at his resurrection.
 - **1 Corinthians 15:20** “But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.”
 - Those who rose immediately after Christ’s resurrection (**Matt 27:52-53**)
 - The purpose was probably to provide further support for Christ’s resurrection as these people were known to those in the city.
 - Church saints at the Rapture (**1 Thess. 4:13-17**)
 - The two witnesses in the middle of Tribulation (**Rev. 11:11**)
 - OT/Tribulation saints at the Second Coming (**Rev. 20:4**)
- **What about the Millennial saints who die?**
 - The Bible does not say but it’s possible that they may be instantly glorified at death.
- Only unbelievers are resurrected in the second resurrection/death after the millennial kingdom
- As church saints, we will receive our glorified bodies at the Rapture...OT saints and Tribulation saints will be given their glorified bodies at the Second Coming found in Revelation 19.

OUR GLORIFIED BODIES

- “...the body we inherit in glorification will not be an entirely new body but will be in some way the body we currently inhabit in this life. Scripture declares that God “will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you” (Rom. 8:11). That is, he will not *replace* your current body; he will *renovate* it. Our bodies will be *changed*, not *exchanged* (1 Cor. 15:51).”⁹
- “The great, final hope of Christians is not to die and be freed from our bodies, but to be raised with new glorious bodies, like Christ’s resurrection body.”¹⁰
- **There are four ways our heavenly bodies are different than our earthly ones.**
- **1 Corinthians 15:42-44** “So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; {43} it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; {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.”
- **Our resurrected bodies are imperishable.**

⁹ John MacArthur, *Biblical Doctrine*, 657.

¹⁰ <https://www.epm.org/resources/2016/Mar/28/heaven-piper-swain/>

- We know our bodies here on earth are subjected to infirmity, diseases, and death. But not so with our resurrected bodies.
- **Our resurrected bodies will be marked with honor, not dishonor.**
 - While our bodies are not dishonorable, it has been corrupted with sin and sinful acts. Our bodies are the vehicle that sin uses to commit various atrocities against God.
- **Our resurrected bodies will be raised in power, not weakness.**
 - Our bodies are both physically and spiritually weak. Even the strongest man will one day face the weakness of an aged body. Spiritually, the body craves and desires its own pleasures.
- **Our resurrected bodies are spiritual bodies, not natural.**
 - This does not mean that believers will have no body at all. Jesus has a resurrected body and ate fish to show this to be true.
 - “Instead, by calling the resurrection body “spiritual,” Paul intends to teach that they will be entirely submitted to and in perfect harmony with the Holy Spirit. In the perfection of their sanctification, believers will have a heart undisturbed by the deceitful lusts of sin, truly godly ambitions and aspirations, and a physical body that is able to carry out those holy impulses without a moment’s distraction or weariness, and therefore, they will be able to fully enjoy the bounties of the new creation God has created for his people.”¹¹
- **Even though there are differences, they are still going to be *bodies*.**
- **Believers will recognize one another in heaven.**
 - **Matthew 8:11** “I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven...”
- **Believers will have the fullness of knowledge.**
 - **1 Corinthians 13:12** “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.”
- “Believers will not be ghosts; they will possess literal, physical bodies patterned after Jesus’ resurrected body—capable of eating, drinking, and occupying physical space. Heaven will feature art, music, science, technology, architecture, and education. Human productivity and creativity will continue, completely unhindered by sin.”¹²

¹¹ John MacArthur, *Biblical Doctrine*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 658.

¹² Randy Alcorn, *Eternal Perspective Ministries*, various pages.

BELIEVERS GLORIFICATION AND CREATION

- **Romans 8:19-23** “For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. {20} For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope {21} that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. {22} For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. {23} And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.”
- Believers are not the only “ones” waiting for Christ to come.
- He says that even creation itself is waiting for the believers’ new bodies.
- Since the fall and infection of sin into creation, there has been a longing for redemption.
- “When will this glory of creation be accomplished? Paul leaves us in no doubt. He tells us expressly that the terminus of the groaning and travailing of creation, groaning and travailing because of the bondage of corruption, is nothing other than ‘the adoption, the redemption of our body’ (Rom 8:23). This is just saying that not only do believers wait for the resurrection as that which will bring the liberty of their glory but the creation itself is also waiting for this same event...[cursed creation] is going to be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and its deliverance will be coincident with the consummation of God’s people’s redemption. The two are not only coincident as events but they are correlative in hope.”¹³
- “When we think of glorification, then, it is no narrow perspective that we entertain. It is a renewed cosmos, new heavens and new earth, that we must think of as the context of the believers’ glory, a cosmos delivered from all the consequences of sin, in which there will be no more curse but in which righteousness will have complete possession and undisturbed habitation.”¹⁴
- “In this life believers sometimes groan and suffer because they sense their incompleteness. Yet they have a sure hope. The doctrine of perseverance guarantees that the salvation they possess will never be lost. And the doctrine of glorification promises that something better lies ahead. We will be everything that God has intended us to be. In part our glorification will take place in connection with death and our passage from the limitations of this earthly existence; in part it will occur in connection with Christ’s second coming.”¹⁵

¹³ Murray, *Redemption*, 179, 181.

¹⁴ Ibid. 179.

¹⁵ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 928.