

Soteriology Part 7

Death & Final Resurrection

- **What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?**

Upon death, the soul of every believer is made perfect in holiness and does immediately pass into glory. Their physical bodies remain behind until the resurrection.

At mortal death, the believer is made **perfect, passing immediately to glory.**

Luke 23:39-43 – “One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, **today you will be with me in Paradise.**”

Hebrews 12:22-23 – “[Y]ou have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the **spirits of the righteous made perfect.**”

2 Corinthians 5:6-9 – “So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be **away from the body and at home with the Lord.** So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.”

Philippians 1:23 – “I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to **depart and be with Christ**, for that is far better.”

Question: How might this hope be demonstrated in the life of a believer when he or she experiences the pain of losing a loved one in death?

The Christian’s physical body **decays, like all the rest, until the resurrection.**

1 Corinthians 15:35-44 – “35 But someone will ask, “**How are the dead raised?** With **what kind of body** do they come?” 36 You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37 And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. 38 But God

gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. 39 For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. 40 There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. 41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. 42 **So is it with the resurrection of the dead.** What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. 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."**

- **What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?**

At the resurrection, believers will be raised up in glory and fully acquitted in the Day of Judgment. From then throughout eternity, all believers will be perfectly blessed and enjoy God forever. The sinner will be raised to judgment and eternal punishment.

Question: What are some examples of ideas that point to a nonphysical afterlife?

The final state of all believers is a glorified **physical body.**

Daniel 12:2 – Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.

John 5:28-29 – Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, **those who have done good to the resurrection of life**, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

Acts 24:14-15 – But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that **there will be a resurrection** of both the just and the unjust.

Question: How is resurrection different than reincarnation, ethereal absorption, or pseudo-Christian spiritualism?

1 Corinthians 15:45-49 – “45 Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. 47 The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. 48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 **Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.**”

1 John 3:2-3 – Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we **shall be like him**, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

1 Corinthians 6:14 – And **God raised the Lord and will also raise us up** by his power.

Question: What seems to be the focus of a believer’s assurance of a final resurrection?

All unrepentant sinners will be raised to judgment and eternal punishment.

Matthew 25:31-34, 41, 46 – “31 When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 Before him will be gathered all the nations, and **he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.** 33 And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. 34 Then **the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world...** 41 Then **he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’ ... 46 And **these will go away into eternal punishment**, but the righteous into eternal life.**

Revelation 20:11-15 – “Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and **they were judged**, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. **And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.**”

Berkhof – “The wicked are consigned to the place of punishment called "hell". Some deny that hell is a place and regard it merely as a condition, but the Bible uses local terms right along. It speaks, for instance, of a "furnace of fire," Matt. 13:42, a "lake of fire", Rev. 20:14, 15, and of a "prison," I Pet. 3:19, all of which are local terms.”

“In this place they will be totally deprived of the divine favor, will experience an endless disturbance of life, will suffer positive pains in body and soul, and will be subject to pangs of conscience, anguish, and despair, Matt. 8:12, 13; Mark 9:47, 48; Luke 16:23, 28; Rev. 4:10; 21:8.”

“It is evident that their punishment will be eternal. Some deny this, because the words 'eternal' and 'everlasting' may simply denote a long period of time. Yet this is not the usual meaning of the words, and there is no reason to think that they have that meaning when applied to the future punishment of the wicked. Moreover, other terms are used, which point to endless punishment, Mark 9:43, 48; Luke 16:26.”¹

Question: What are some reasons that one might give to argue against this concept?

Question: What do you think might be the motivation for such arguments?

All believers will be perfectly blessed and will enjoy God forevermore.

Romans 8:18-25 – “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for **adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies**. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.”

¹ Berkhof, Louis. "The Resurrection, the Last Judgment and the Final State by Louis Berkhof." Accessed July 14, 2013. <http://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/lastday.html>

Poythress – “In Romans 8:18-25 God shows us how to think about our future. We who belong to Christ are “sons of God” (verses 14-15, 19). The Spirit of Christ dwells within us, guaranteeing our final redemption (verse 23). We have eternal life even now (verses 6, 10; John 5:24), but we also long for the full coming of life and peace in the future: “we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies” (Rom. 8:23).”

Our goal is defined by Christ himself. God has “predestined [us] to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers” (verse 29). Christ is “the firstborn among many brothers,” not simply because his resurrection is chronologically first, and not only because he is preeminent over us, but because his resurrection is the pattern or model that we imitate and to which we conform.”

“He is our representative, not only by bearing our sin, but in displaying the full image to which we are united and into which we are transformed. “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you” (verse 11). “Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust [Adam], we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven [Christ, in his resurrection body]” (1 Cor. 15:49; see also 1 Cor. 15:42-49).”

“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another” (2 Cor. 3:18).”²

Revelation 21:1-7 – “Then I saw a **new heaven and a new earth**, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 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 dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore,** for the former things have passed away.”

And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” And he said to me, “**It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.**”

² Poythress, Vern. “Reversal of the Curse.” *Table Talk*, March 28, 2004, 7-12. Accessed July 14, 2013. <http://www.frame-poythress.org/reversing-the-fall-and-setting-creation-free/>