

## The Intermediate State

- The final theory to reject is more of a newer one. It is the idea that the resurrection occurs immediately after death.
  - It is argued that when you die as a Christian, you are given the resurrection body and live in heaven, and if you are an unbeliever you are given the immortal body to burn in Hell.
- This view disputes the teachings in 1 Corinthians 15 that contradict it by saying Paul still had the incorrect teaching he received as a Pharisee, and thus favored a future bodily resurrection.
  - But later on when he wrote 2 Corinthians 5, he had the correct view by stating being away from the body was cloth us in the presence of the Lord.
- Apparently this view misses the point of the phrase, “away from the body.”
- Furthermore, this view denies the doctrine of inerrancy.
  - Why would the Holy Spirit leave a huge chapter on the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 that would be theologically incorrect?
  - Also, Philippians 3 was written after both Corinthian letters and it speaks of us having a physical body like Jesus’ when He returns

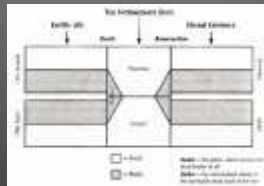


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- We can conclude this section by now stating what the Bible actually teaches about the intermediate state.
- Believers (disembodied) go immediately into the presence of the Lord.
  - 2 Cor 5:8 – In fact, we are confident, and we would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.
  - Phil 1:23-24 – I am torn between the two. I long to depart and be with Christ— which is far better—<sup>24</sup> but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.
  - Luke 23:43 – And he said to him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”
  - Heb 12:23 – to the assembly of the firstborn whose names have been written in heaven, to a Judge, who is God of all, to the spirits of righteous people made perfect.
- Unbelievers (disembodied) go immediately into misery, torment, and punishment.
  - Luke 16:23-26 = rich man’s misery and torment.
- Believers await the resurrection of their bodies.
  - At the return of Christ, we will be reunited with our bodies. 1 Cor 15 is all about this.

## The Intermediate State

- There is no “second opportunity” to accept Christ post-mortem, in the intermediate state.
- There is a small movement, but still growing (even among evangelicals) that because of the wideness of God’s mercy, He will give human beings another chance or opportunity to hear the gospel, trust, and obey Christ.
  - For some, this will be their first opportunity since they never heard of the gospel.
  - For others, this will be the last of many opportunities.
  - The majority will repent and be saved. They already began to experience separation and alienation from the Lord in Hell.



## The Intermediate State

- There are numerous problems with this.
  - First, the theological support (appeal to God’s great mercy alone) neglects consideration of His other attributes (justice, holiness, righteousness, wrath, etc.) It is an elevation of one attribute over another, which distorts God and His ways.
  - Second, biblical support is lacking. There is no mention anywhere of a second opportunity. In fact, it is contradicted.
  - Third Scripture presents a coming judgment as determined by things we do in this life, not by some sort of post-mortem chance in the intermediate state (Hebrews 9:27). Man dies once, then comes the judgment.



## Conclusion

- Individual eschatology is often neglected today, but it is important nevertheless.
- Included in this topic are the following sub-topics:
  - Physical Death
  - The Art of Dying
  - Intermediate State
- Like the other doctrines of the Bible, this should spur us on to holy living in the present.

# SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Eschatology– Study Last Things– Part 2  
Cosmic Eschatology

## Introduction

- We are continuing Eschatology; from ἔσχατος and λογος.
- There are two general subdivisions.
  - Individual Eschatology: This covers death and the intermediate state.
  - Cosmic Eschatology: This covers the return of Christ and all that goes along with it. It affects the whole universe!
  - In this lesson, we will cover Cosmic Eschatology.
- Like every other doctrine, eschatology should affect the way you live now, otherwise your eschatology is likely wrong and misguided.
  - We will cover the following topics:
    - Return of Christ
    - Return of Christ as it relates to the tribulation and millennium
    - Resurrection
    - Final Eschatology—eternal life or eternal judgment

## Return of Christ

- It is necessary to compare the first and second comings of Christ. There are indeed two comings.
  - Titus 2:11-14 – For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, <sup>12</sup> instructing us to deny godlessness and worldly lusts and to live in a sensible, righteous, and godly way in the present age, <sup>13</sup> while we wait for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. <sup>14</sup> He gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for himself a people for his own possession, eager to do good works.
  - Hebrews 9:28 – so also Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.



## Return of Christ

- It will be a definite future event (Matt. 26:54; Acts 3:19-21; 2 Thess. 1:7-10).
  - Acts 3:19-21 – Therefore repent and turn back, so that your sins may be wiped out, <sup>20</sup>that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send Jesus, who has been appointed for you as the Messiah. <sup>21</sup>Heaven must receive him until the time of the restoration of all things, which God spoke about through his holy prophets from the beginning.
- People will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with great glory and power. Jesus himself will come.



## Return of Christ

- We do not and cannot know when this event will take place (Mark 13:32-35; Acts 1:7); indeed, it will come unexpectedly (2 Pet. 3:2-4; Matt. 25:8-10).
  - Acts 1:7 – He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority.
- God has decreed the time of Christ’s return, but He has not revealed it, and He will not reveal it.
  - So if someone says they know when Jesus is returning, they are wrong. If they happen to be right, it is only by coincidence because God is not giving revelation of it. It will come unexpectedly.
- Even though it comes after certain signs, they do not inform us when His exact return will be.
  - We are to be prepared. It will be like the days of Noah and the Flood. Unbelievers will be caught unaware.

## Return of Christ

- Christ's return will be personal, visible, and bodily (Acts 1:11).
- It is Jesus Himself who will return. Just like His departure was visible, so will be His return. It is not spiritual, but physical and bodily return. This is different from His spiritual presence with us in the Holy Spirit now. He will come with great power and majesty and splendor.
  - Acts 1:11 – They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you have seen him going into heaven.”
- His return will be triumphant and glorious (Matt. 24:30).
  - Matt 24:30 -- Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the peoples of the earth will mourn; and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.



## Return of Christ

- Despite the clarity of the passages we already looked at, there are still radically different understandings of this future event.
- Our basis for believing He will return is due to numerous statements made by Him, the Apostles, and the Prophets.
  - John 14:1-3 & 1 Thessalonians 4:16.
- There are two contrasting views as to how He will return.
  - 1<sup>st</sup>: an imminent kingdom was going to break its way into history by swift force.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup>: an idealistic kingdom of righteousness would overtake the world – Postmillennial.
- The Scriptural view is the 1<sup>st</sup>. The kingdom shatters the kingdoms of the world by force at Christ's return.
  - Daniel 2:44-45 ; Daniel 7:21-22, 27; Revelation 19:11, 19-21; Revelation 20:4



## Physical Return

- Some deny a physical return of the Lord and claim the return was spiritual, having been fulfilled at Pentecost.
  - They focus on His “presence” rather than His “coming.”
- Acts 1:9-11 refutes this.
- Jehovah Witnesses claim Christ returned on October 1, 1914, but it was invisible.
  - They foolishly set a date, and the “invisible” explanation was how they saved face to their followers.
- The Scriptures overwhelmingly teach a physical return.

