

Associated Gospel Churches - Articles of Faith and Doctrine

The Resurrection of the Body

March 5, 2006

The Resurrection of the Body

XVI. The Resurrection of the Body

We believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, according to the Scriptures, in bodily form, and thus became the Firstfruits of them that sleep; that upon His return He will raise out from among the dead those that have died in Christ, this being the first resurrection; and that, after the thousand years, He will raise them that have died in unbelief from their graves to receive their sentence.

Psalm 90:3-4; John 5:28,29; Isaiah 26:19; 1 Corinthians 15; Daniel 12:2; Romans 1:4, 8:23; Revelation 20:5-6

The Resurrection of the Body

- **main components of AGC article**
 - **bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ**
 - **bodily resurrection of believers before the Millennial kingdom**
 - **believers' resurrection patterned on that of Christ, the Firstfruits**
 - **presupposes a pre-millennial view of the return of Christ**
 - **(bodily) resurrection of unbelievers after the thousand years to face judgment**

The Resurrection of the Body

- the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ
 - according to the Scriptures
 - **predicted in the OT**

“Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.” (Psalm 16:9-10)
 - **reported in all 4 Gospels**
 - Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20-21
 - **testified to many times in Acts & the epistles**

The Resurrection of the Body

- the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ

- a central tenet of Christianity

- **Christ's resurrection ensures our regeneration**

- in His resurrection, earned for us a new life like His → our spirits made alive with new resurrection power

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy, He has given us new birth into a living hope *through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...*” (1 Pet. 1:3)

“We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, *just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*” (Rom. 6:4)

The Resurrection of the Body

- the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ
 - a central tenet of Christianity
 - **Christ's resurrection ensures our justification**
 - Christ's resurrection was God's declaration of approval of Christ's work of redemption
 - “...and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Rom. 1:4)
 - “He was delivered over to death for our sins and *was raised to life for our justification.*” (Rom. 4:25)

The Resurrection of the Body

- the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ

- a central tenet of Christianity

- Christ's resurrection ensures our glorification

- Christ is the “firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” – those who die in Him will be raised like Him

“But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when He comes, those who belong to Him.” (1 Cor. 15:20-23)

The Resurrection of the Body

- **the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ**
 - a central tenet of Christianity
 - **thus, our faith is futile if Christ was not raised from the dead**

“And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith... And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men... And as for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour? I die every day – I mean that brothers – just as surely as I glory over you in Christ Jesus our Lord. If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, ‘Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.’” (1 Cor. 15:14,17-18, 30-32)

The Resurrection of the Body

- **the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ**
 - a central tenet of Christianity
 - **denied by many modernist/liberal “Christians”**
 - Christ’s resurrection seen as a metaphor, or as an embellishment added to the Gospel by the early church
 - Christ may have ‘risen’ spiritually, or ‘risen’ in the hearts of His followers, but not literally or bodily

The Resurrection of the Body

- **the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ**
 - a central tenet of Christianity
 - **denied by many modernist/liberal “Christians”**
 - but may often speak using ‘orthodox’ language (i.e. affirming that Christ “rose”) – but with different underlying meaning
 - “Doublespeak has become an insidious disease... Professors and students learned to couch their beliefs in acceptable terminology and in holy jargon so that although thinking one thing, the speaker calculated so as to cause the hearer to affirm something else.” (Dr. R. Elliott, quoted in J. Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation*, Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000, p. 9)
 - similar method now being employed by some ‘post-modernist’ evangelicals (though not necessarily wrt the resurrection)

The Resurrection of the Body

- **the resurrection of believers & unbelievers**
 - **resurrection of both believers and unbelievers affirmed in Scripture**

- **OT affirmations**

“But your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead.” (Isa. 26:19)

“Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.” (Dan. 12:2)

The Resurrection of the Body

- the resurrection of believers & unbelievers
 - resurrection of both believers and unbelievers affirmed in Scripture

- **NT affirmations**

“Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear His voice and come out – those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.” (John 5:28-29)

“Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.” (Rom. 8:23)

The Resurrection of the Body

- the resurrection of believers & unbelievers
 - resurrection of believers will occur at the (pre-millennial) return of Christ
 - aka the first resurrection
- “...They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until after the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.” (Rev. 20:4b-6)

The Resurrection of the Body

- the resurrection of believers & unbelievers
 - resurrection of unbelievers will occur after the thousand year reign (i.e. Millennial kingdom)
 - **assumes pre-millennial view of end times**

“The rest of the dead did not come to life until after the thousand years were ended... (Rev. 20:4b-6)

- **other Scripture passages seem to suggest a single resurrection (not two), but this may be because from God’s (and thus, the prophet’s) perspective, 1000 years is not a long time**

“You turn men back to dust, saying, ‘Return to dust, O sons of men.’ For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night.” (Psalm 90:3-4)

The Resurrection of the Body

- **Review - 3 basic eschatologic views**
 - **Amillennialism**
 - **Post-millennialism**
 - **Pre-millennialism**
 - **Dispensational (pre-tribulational) pre-millennialism**
 - **mid-tribulational variant**
 - **Historic (post-tribulational) pre-millennialism**

The Resurrection of the Body

- **Amillennialism**

- **the view that there is no literal Millennium**

- **thousand years in Rev. 20 is symbolic of the present Church age in which we are living**

- **Church age will last until Christ returns and all (believers and unbelievers) are resurrected at the same time**

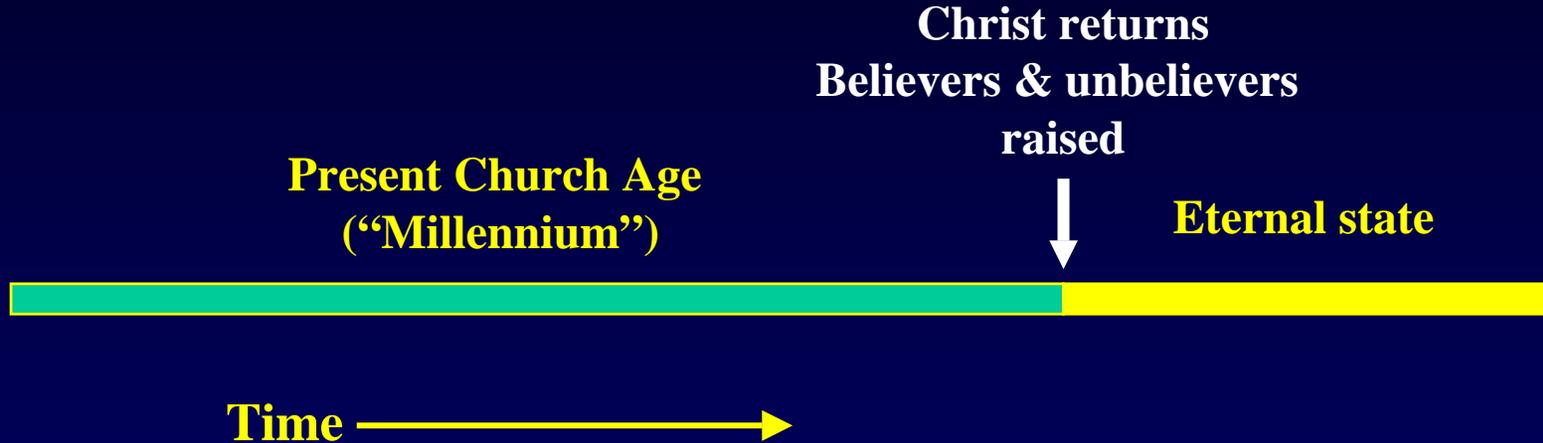
- **believers raised to eternal life**

- **Rev. 20:4-6 seen as referring to believers who have died and gone to heaven, and are now reigning with Christ in heaven**

- **unbelievers raised to face judgment**

The Resurrection of the Body

- Amillennialism

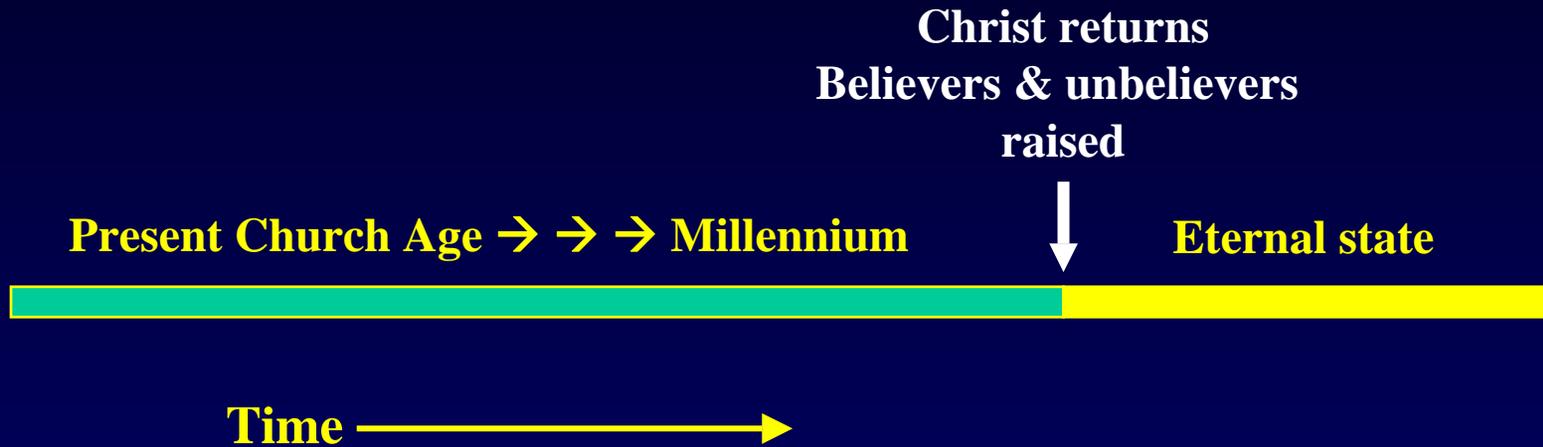


The Resurrection of the Body

- **Post-millennialism**
 - the view that the ‘millennium’ will come through the progress and success of the Gospel
 - progress of the Gospel results in gradual conversion of more and more people, until increased Christian influence on society ushers in a golden age of peace and righteousness (the ‘Millennium’)
 - Christ returns after Millennium, followed by resurrection of believers & unbelievers, final judgment, age of eternity

The Resurrection of the Body

- Post-millennialism



The Resurrection of the Body

- **Pre-millennialism**

- the view that the second coming of Christ will be before the Millennium, during which He will reign personally and bodily on earth

- the present Church age continues until the Great Tribulation

- **Christ returns**

- resurrects and takes His people up (rapture) to be with Him

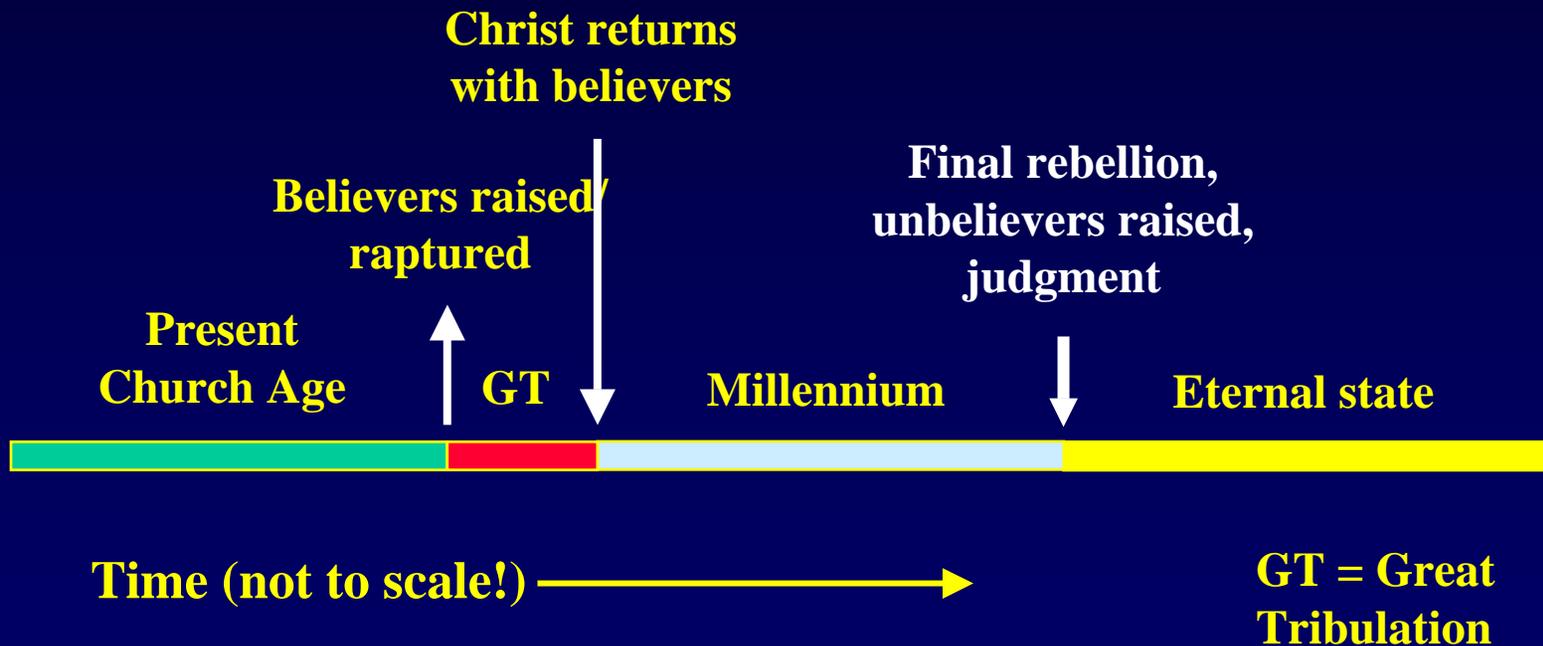
- establishes thousand-year reign on earth

- unbelievers raised to judgment after 1000-year reign

- variants of pre-millennialism differ on timing of Christ's return

The Resurrection of the Body

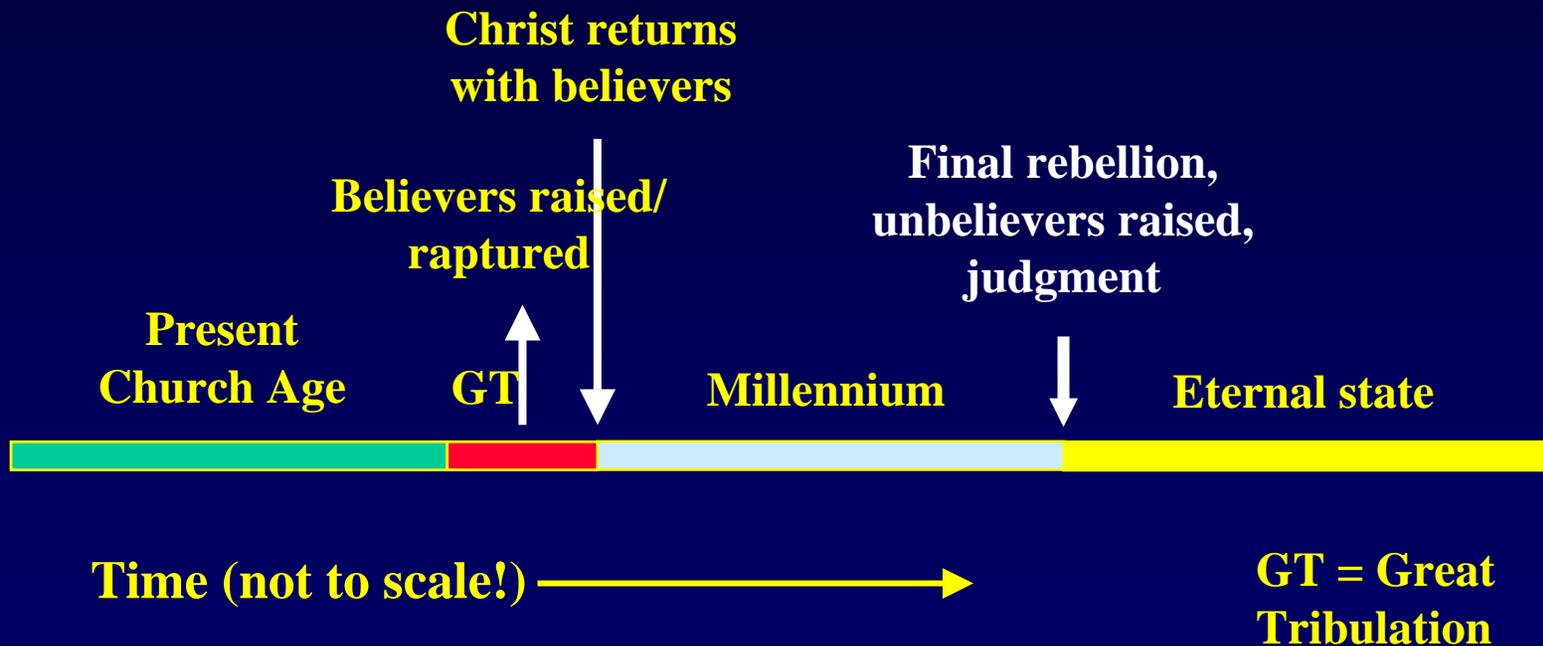
- **Pre-millennialism**
 - **Dispensational (pre-tribulational) premillennialism**



The Resurrection of the Body

- Pre-millennialism

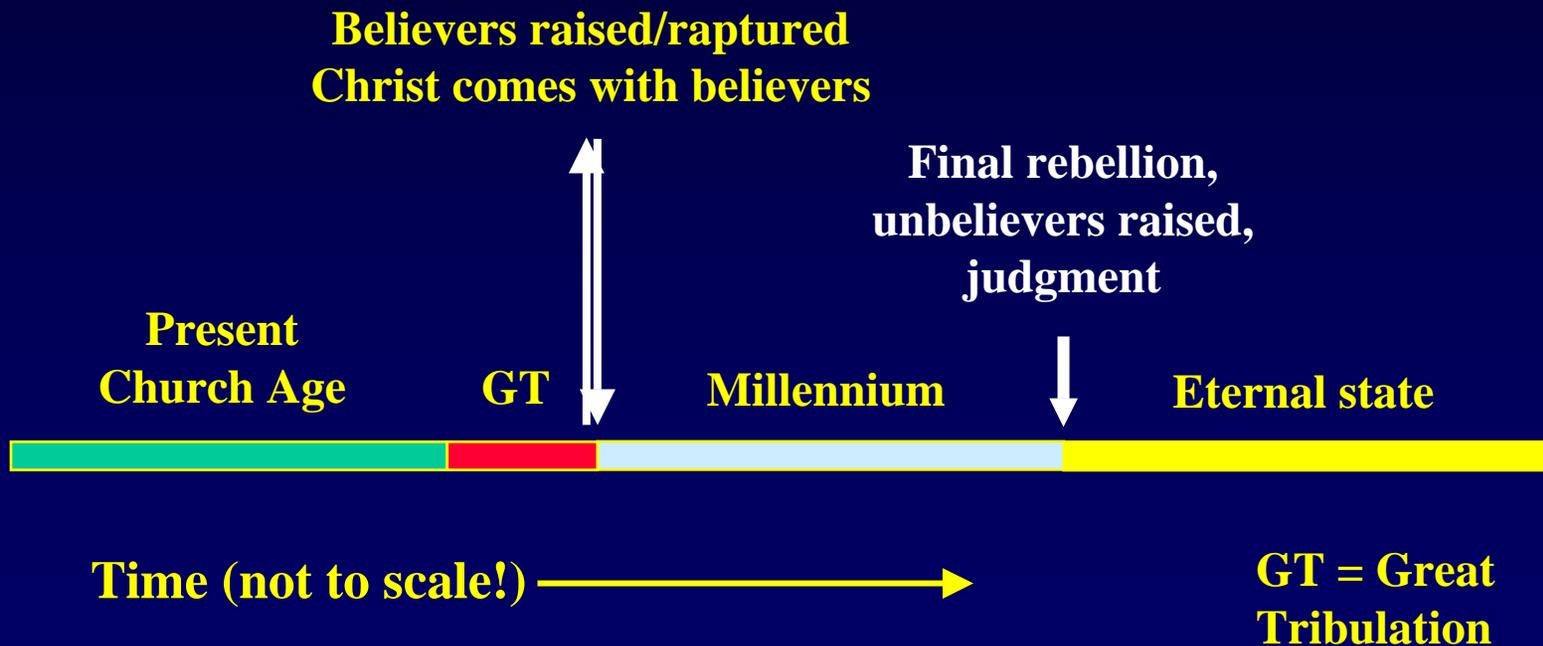
- Dispensational premillennialism - midtribulational variant



The Resurrection of the Body

- Pre-millennialism

- Historic (post-tribulational) premillennialism



The Resurrection of the Body

- the resurrection of believers & unbelievers
 - When?
 - resurrection of believers occurs at the (pre-millennial) return of Christ
 - resurrection of unbelievers occurs after the thousand year reign (i.e. Millennial kingdom)

The Resurrection of the Body

- the resurrection of believers & unbelievers
 - What happens until then?
 - question about the “Intermediate State”
 - various theories in church history
 - “soul sleep” – souls enter non-conscious state (‘sleep’) until the Resurrection
 - resurrection seems to occur instantaneously after death, because that is their next conscious experience
 - refuted by various Scriptures (e.g. Luke 23:43, 2 Cor. 5:6-9, Phil. 1:23, Heb. 12:1,22-23)
- “Jesus answered him, ‘I tell you the truth, *today* you will be with me in paradise.’” (Luke 23:43)

The Resurrection of the Body

- the resurrection of believers & unbelievers
 - What happens until then?
 - various theories in church history
 - dead descend into Hades, where they remain until Day of Judgment, or until sufficiently purified
 - various divisions in Hades
 - e.g. purgatory – division nearest to hell
 - *limbus infantum* – further from hell than purgatory - where unbaptized infants go for eternity – no conscious pain, but excluded from heaven
 - *limbus patrum* – even further from hell – where OT saints went until Christ’s “descent into Hades”

The Resurrection of the Body

- the resurrection of believers & unbelievers
 - What happens until then?
 - various theories in church history
 - dead descend into Hades
 - supported from Apocryphal text (2 Maccabees 12:42-45)
 - no explicit warrant from canonical Scriptures
 - held largely by Roman Catholic church – but certain aspects (i.e. *limbus infantum*) currently being questioned and seem likely to be dropped (but not purgatory)

The Resurrection of the Body

- the resurrection of believers & unbelievers

- The Intermediate State

- souls/spirits of believers go immediately into the presence of God upon death

“Jesus answered him, ‘I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.’” (Luke 23:43)

“We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.” (2 Cor. 5:8)

The Resurrection of the Body

- the resurrection of believers & unbelievers

- The Intermediate State

- souls/spirits of believers go immediately into the presence of God upon death

“When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, ‘How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?’ Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.” (Rev. 6:9-11)

- bodies raised at Christ’s return

The Resurrection of the Body

- the resurrection of believers & unbelievers
 - The Intermediate State
 - souls/spirits of unbelievers go immediately into eternal punishment
 - no “second chance”
 - e.g. account of Lazarus & the rich man (Luke 16:19-31)
 - “a great chasm has been fixed” (16:26)
 - rich man in torment, while his brothers still living (16:27-28)
 - bodies raised at Christ’s return

The Resurrection of the Body

- The Resurrection body

- a new, glorified body patterned on Christ's

- Christ the firstfruits, the pattern of things to come

“But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when He comes, those who belong to Him... The first man [Adam] was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.”
(1 Cor. 15:20-23, 47-49)

The Resurrection of the Body

- **The Resurrection body**
 - a new, glorified body patterned on Christ's
 - **a body made perfect (1 Cor. 15:35-54)**
 - sown perishable, raised imperishable
 - sown in dishonor, raised in glory
 - sown in weakness, raised in power
 - sown mortal, raised immortal
 - **a body suited to eternal life in the new heaven & new earth**
 - sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:44)
 - i.e. a body that will be completely subject to and responsive to the will of the Holy Spirit (unlike our present natural bodies tainted by the sinful nature)

The Resurrection of the Body

- **The Resurrection body**
 - a new, glorified body patterned on Christ's
 - **very different from present body, but also showing some continuity**
 - raised from remnants of our present bodies
 - analogy of sowing a seed (i.e. our natural bodies) resulting in the full plant (our resurrection bodies)
 - plant that grows depends on the seed that was sown
 - Jesus in His resurrection body
 - may have been able to do things our current bodies cannot (e.g. pass through locked doors? – controversial)
 - had wounds in hands & side, was still able to eat
 - was still recognizable to disciples, though not always immediately

The Resurrection of the Body

- **The Resurrection body**
 - a new, glorified body patterned on Christ's
 - a body that will be part of life that far exceeds our present experience

“However, as it is written: ‘No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him.’” (1 Cor. 2:9)

“Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” (1 John 3:2)

The Resurrection of the Body

- Application

- How then should we live?

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature...” (Col. 3:1-5a)

“Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” (1 John 3:2-3)

The Resurrection of the Body

- Application

- How then should we live?

“When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’

‘Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?’

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.” (1 Cor. 15:53-58)

Next class

**The Eternal Blessedness of the
Saved, and the Eternal Punishment
of the Lost**

March 12, 2006

References

- **Berkhof, L. *The History of Christian Doctrines*. (London: Banner of Truth, 1969), p. 259-266**
- **Grudem, W. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), pp. 608-623, 810-839.**