

Chapter XXX: The Resurrection, the Last Judgment, and the Final State

1. The Resurrection

Scripture teaches us that at the return of Christ the dead will be raised up. The Old Testament clearly speaks of it in Isa. 26:19, Dan. 12:2. The New Testament contains more abundant proof of it, John 5:25-29; 6:39-40, 44; 11:24-25; 1 Cor. 15; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; Rev. 20:13.

a. The character of the resurrection. Scripture teaches us to look forward to a *bodily* resurrection, similar to the resurrection of Christ. The redemption in Christ will include the body, Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 6:13-20. Such a resurrection is clearly taught in 1 Cor. 15, and in Rom. 8:11. It will include both the righteous and the wicked, but will be an act of deliverance and glorification only for the former. For the latter the re-union of body and soul will issue in the extreme penalty of eternal death.

b. The time of the resurrection. According to Scripture the general resurrection will coincide with the return of Christ and the end of the world, and will immediately precede the final judgment, John 5:27-29; 6:39-40, 44, 54; 11:24; 1 Cor. 15:23; Phil. 3:20-21; Rev. 20:11-15. Pre-millennarians teach a double resurrection: one of the just at the return of Christ, and another of the unjust a thousand years later, at the end of the world. But the Bible speaks of the resurrection of both in a single breath. Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15. It connects the judgment of the wicked with the coming of Christ, 2 Thess. 1:7-10, and places the resurrection of the just at the last day, John 6:39-40, 44, 54; 11:24.

2. The Last Judgment

The doctrine of the resurrection leads right on to that of the last judgment. The Bible speaks of the coming of a final judgment in no uncertain terms, Ps. 96:13; 98:9; Eccl. 3:17; 12:14; Matt. 25:31-46; Rom. 2:5-10; 2 Cor. 5:10. 2Tim. 4:1; 1Pet. 4:5; Rev. 20:11-14.

a. The Judge and his assistants. Christ as the Mediator will be the Judge, Matt. 25:31-32; John 5:27; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Phil. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:1. This honor was conferred on Christ as

the reward for His atoning work. The angels will assist Him, Matt. 13:41-42; 24:31; 25:31, and the saints will also have some share in His judicial work, 1 Cor. 6:2-3; Rev. 20:4.

b. The parties that will be judged. It is perfectly evident from Scripture that every individual of the human race will have to appear before the judgment seat, Eccl. 12:14; Matt. 12:36-37; 25:32; Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:12. Some think that the righteous will be excepted, but this is contrary to Matt. 13:30, 40-43, 49; 25:31-36; 2 Cor. 5:10. Clearly the demons will also be judged, Matt. 8:29; 1 Cor. 6:3; 2Pet 2:4; Jude 6.

c. The time of the judgment. The final judgment will naturally be at the end of the world, and will follow immediately after the resurrection of the dead, John 5:28-29; Rev. 20:12-13. The duration of the judgment cannot be determined. The Bible speaks of “the day of judgment”, but this does not necessarily mean that it will be a day of twenty-four hours. Neither is there any ground to assert with the Pre-millennarians that it will be a day of a thousand years.

d. The standard of judgment. The standard by which saints and sinners will be judged will evidently be the revealed will of God. Gentiles will be judged by the law of nature; Jews by the Old Testament revelation, and those acquainted with the fuller revelation of the gospel will be judged by it, Rom. 2:12. God will give every man his due.

3. The Final State

The final judgment serves the purpose of setting forth clearly what the final state of each person will be.

a. The final state of the wicked. 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”, 1Pet. 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. 14:10; 21:8. There will be degrees in their punishment, Matt. 11:22, 24;

Luke 12:47-48; 20:47. 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.

b. The final state of the righteous. The final state of believers will be preceded by the passing of the present world and the establishment of a new creation. This will not be an entirely new creation, but rather a renewal of the present creation. Ps. 102:26-27; Heb. 12:26-28. Heaven will be the eternal abode of believers. Some think of heaven merely as a condition, but the Bible clearly represents it as a place, John 14:2; Matt. 22:12-13; 25:10-12. The righteous will not only inherit heaven, but the entire new creation, Matt. 5:5; Rev. 21:1-3. The reward of the righteous is described as eternal life, that is, not merely endless life, but life in all its fulness, without any of the imperfections and disturbances of the present. This fulness of life is enjoyed in communion with God, which is really the essence of eternal life, Rev. 21:3. While all will enjoy perfect bliss, there will be degrees also in the enjoyments of heaven, Dan. 12:3; 2 Cor. 9:6.

To Memorize. Passages proving:

a. A general resurrection:

Dan. 12:2. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

John 5:28-29. "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment."

Acts 24:15. "Having hope toward God, which these also themselves look for, that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust."

b. A resurrection of the body:

Rom. 8:11. "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through His Spirit that dwells in you."

1 Cor. 15:35. "But some one will say, How are the dead raised? and with what manner of body do they come?" Also verse 44. "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body."

c. A resurrection at the last day or at the coming of Christ:

1 Cor. 15:22-23. "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; then they that are Christ's, at his coming."

1 Thess. 4:16. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

John 6:40. "For this is the will of my Father, that every one that beholds the Son, and believes on Him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

d. A final judgment with Christ as Judge:

2 Cor. 5:10. "For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things [done] in the body, according to what he hath done, whether [it be] good or bad."

2 Tim. 4:1. "I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead..."

Rev. 20:12. "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works."

e. Eternal awards and punishments:

Matt. 25:46. "And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life."

Rom. 2:6-8. "Who will render to every man according to his works: to them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life: but unto them that are factious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation."

2 Thess. 1:9. "Who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might."

f. Degrees in awards and punishments:

Dan. 12:3. "And they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

Luke 12:47-48. "And that servant, who knew his lord's will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. And to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom they commit much, of him will they ask the more."

2 Cor. 9:6. "But this I say, He that sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully."

For Further Study:

- a. How does Jesus argue the resurrection in Matt. 22:23-33?
- b. Does Paul in 2 Thess. 1:7-10 place the judgment of the wicked a thousand years after the coming of Christ?
- c. Does 1 Cor. 6:3 prove that the good angels will also be judged?

Questions for Review:

1. How can you prove the resurrection of the body from the New Testament?
2. What Bible proof is there for the resurrection of the wicked?
3. How does their resurrection differ from that of the righteous?
4. What does the Bible teach respecting the time of the resurrection?
5. How would you disprove the doctrine of a double resurrection?
6. What Scripture proof is there for a last judgment?
7. Who will be the Judge, and who will assist Him?
8. What parties will be judged?
9. When will the last judgment be, and how long will it last?
10. By what standard will men be judged?
11. In what will the punishment of the wicked consist?
12. How can you prove that it will be unending?
13. Will the new creation be an entirely new creation?
14. What will be the reward of the righteous?