

Resurrection of the Dead

Resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment are bound together by the logic of the scriptures. Eternal judgment always follows resurrection of the dead. Resurrection always precedes eternal judgment. To properly address these we need to look first at two areas: time and eternity.

Time and Eternity

Eternity is not endless time, although that is the way that we tend to think of it. Eternity is the nature and mode of God's own being--the uncreated realm in which God Himself exists.

Isaiah 57:15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Exodus 3:14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

Revelation 1:8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Isaiah 40:28 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.

Time was created by God as part of the creation of the Heavens and earth as mentioned in the first verse of Genesis. We refer to it today as the space-time continuum. Einstein's Theory of Relativity shows that space, matter, and time are related. Since time is part of creation then God exists outside of time unlike us.

While we live our lives by the clock, there comes a point in our life that the clock stops ticking. At death we step out of time and into eternity. When our life ends, time stops for us. When this happens two things are awaiting us on the other side of time:

1. resurrection of the dead, and
2. eternal judgment.

Our faith hinges on the fact that there is a resurrection of the dead because Jesus was raised from the dead. This is a central or key point to Christianity.

1 Cor. 15:16-22 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: (17) And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. (18) Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. (19) If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. (20) But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. (21) For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. (22) For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made

alive.

Romans 14:9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

There is one class of exceptions to the resurrection of the dead and that is, naturally, those who never die.

1 Cor. 15:51-53 Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. (52) In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. (53) For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

True Christians which are alive when Christ returns will not die but will be changed. They will skip the death process. As we can see from these scriptures, the resurrection of the dead (which means resurrection of the body) occurs at the time of Christ's return and before the judgment seat.

NOTE: There are two other people that possibly fit into the exception category: Enoch and Elijah. They were translated from Earth to Heaven without seeing death. (I personally believe that these return to Earth as the two witnesses in Revelation where, eventually, they will be killed. Enoch represents the righteous that were before the Flood and Elijah represents the righteous after the Flood.)

We can see a principle in this. Since resurrection precedes judgment in every case, man will not appear before God as disembodied souls but as a complete person--the complete human personality: spirit, soul, and body.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Acts 17:30-31 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: (31) Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Romans 14:10-12 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. (11) For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. (12) So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: Man has both a material and an immaterial component. The body is material and the soul and spirit are immaterial and as a result the body decomposes while there is no decomposition with the immaterial aspect of our being.

Ecclesiastes 3:18-21 I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God

might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts. (19) For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. (20) All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. (21) Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?

Ecclesiastes 12:7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

After Death--Before Resurrection

When a person dies, the body returns to the dust from which it came and the spirit and soul return to God who gave it. This could mean that all, the righteous and the unrighteous, appear before God after death. However, this is not for judgment which only occurs after resurrection. The purpose of this appearing would be to hear the divine sentence appointing to each the state and place each must occupy from death until resurrection and final judgment. Others believe that when a person dies his soul goes automatically to the appropriate place to await judgment and doesn't appear before God at all until the judgment time.

However, there are two facts that are made clear in the Bible:

1. After death, there is a separation between the righteous and the wicked;
2. After death, the condition of the righteous was different before Christ's death and resurrection than afterward.

We can glean some facts about this from God's judgment on the oppressing King of Babylon in Isaiah.

Isaiah 14:9-10 Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. (10) All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?

First, this scripture does not suggest any knowledge of events currently occurring on the earth. This is important because Hollywood always represents that those who have died are fully aware of what is happening with the living.

Second, we can determine 5 facts from this scripture:

1. there is a definite persistence of personality
2. there is recognition of one person by another
3. there is communication between one person and another
4. there is an awareness of conditions in Hell
5. there is some correspondence in some measure between a man's state in the world and

his state in the next. Kings were still recognized as Kings.

Ezekiel chapter 32 verses 17-32 present a similar picture containing these same five points.

The New Testament is in agreement with the Old but reveals or adds some additional details for us. Let's look at the scriptures about the beggar, Lazarus, and the rich man.

Luke 16:19-26 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: (20) And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, (21) And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. (22) And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; (23) And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. (24) And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. (25) But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. (26) And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

This set of scriptures clearly reveal that the destiny after death of the righteous is different from the wicked. The rich man is in a place of torment and Lazarus is in a place of rest. Between these two areas is an impassable gulf.

Sheol, Hades, Hell

Our thinking, understanding and traditions about hell are out of line with what the Scriptures present. We have seen too many movies about hell or read too many writer's articles about hell that have been based on cultural concepts taken from pagan religions.

The Hebrew word that is translated as "hell" is *sheol* and means "the place of departed spirits". The Greek word for *sheol* is *hades* and the English word for *hades* is *hell*. As the word has moved through the languages it has picked up extra meanings that were not meant in the original.

Our modern concept of hell is a place in the center of the earth that is burning with fire where the Devil has his throne and rules this underworld. This is not correct. The Devil is not in hell right now. His false kingdom is in the heavenlies. This is where his throne is currently.

Ephesians 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places (*literally, the heavenlies*).

The Devil hasn't even been cast out of the heavenlies and into the Earth yet. This doesn't occur until halfway through Revelation.

Revelation 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and

Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

It is only at the beginning of the Thousand Year Reign of Christ that the Devil is bound in the bottomless pit (which may or may not be hell).

Revelation 20:1-3 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. (2) And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. (3) And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

So, as you see, the Devil is not in hell and is certainly not ruling there.

Prior to the resurrection of Jesus, all departed souls went to sheol or hell. However, there were two compartments with an impassable gulf between them. One side was a place of torment for the wicked. The other side was called Paradise (literally, Garden of God) and Abraham's bosom and was a place of rest for the righteous. This changed for the righteous after the resurrection of Jesus.

The Work of Jesus in His Death and Resurrection

We all understand the work of Jesus on the Cross. He was the Lamb of God offered as a sacrifice for our sins. As the Lamb He became sin for us. He literally took on Himself our sin nature that we might be free and no longer slaves to sin. When Jesus said "It is finished", He was referring to His work as the Sin Offering, the Lamb of God.

John 19:30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

Under the Old Covenant, besides the blood offering that was sprinkled on the altar, there was another offering called the Scapegoat. Once each year it took both of these sacrifices to make atonement for Israel. We have similar provision through Jesus under the New covenant.

Leviticus 16:9-10 And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. (10) But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.

Leviticus 16:20-22 And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: (21) And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: (22) And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.

Jesus was both our sin offering and our scapegoat. When He finished the work of the sin offering (it was always performed first), He began the work of the scapegoat which took place between His death on the cross and His resurrection. There has been little teaching done on the scapegoat. As a result some of the scriptures which point to this have been misinterpreted and misapplied to create erroneous teaching because of lack of understanding. It has created quite a controversy in the Church as a whole.

Let's look at what the bible says about the time between His death and resurrection.

Two facts are clear:

1. When Jesus died, His body was laid in a tomb but it did not decompose;
2. His spirit and soul went to "sheol".

How do we know that He went to sheol (hell)?

Ephesians 4:9-10 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? (10) He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

He descended into the lower parts of the earth before He ascended.

Psalms 16:10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

This is quoted by Peter in Acts 2:25-28 and Paul in Acts 13:35 as prophetic of Jesus. His soul would not be left in hell and his body would not see corruption.

Jesus told the repenting thief that He would see Him in paradise that day.

Luke 23:42-43 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. (43) And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise. (*literally "garden"*)

We have already seen that paradise was the compartment of the righteous in *sheol*. Since Jesus expired before the thief, we can assume that He was there waiting to greet the thief when he arrived.

1 Peter 3:18-20 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: (19) By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; (20) Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

Jesus also apparently went to another area of *sheol* and preached (literally, heralded, proclaimed, declared) to the disobedient ones from the days of Noah.

But it is David, the Psalmist, that gives us the prophetic picture of Jesus suffering as the scapegoat. As I understand the atonement process with both the sin offering and the scapegoat, it was necessary for Jesus to suffer in this way to make a complete or full atonement for us.

Psalms 88:4-18 I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath

no strength: (5) Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand. (6) Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. (7) Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah. (8) Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: I am shut up, and I cannot come forth. (9) Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: LORD, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee. (10) Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah. (11) Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction? (12) Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? (13) But unto thee have I cried, O LORD; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee. (14) LORD, why castest thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me? (15) I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted. (16) Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off. (17) They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together. (18) Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness.

Jesus as the scapegoat was taken into this spiritual wilderness (the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps) and there suffered complete and total separation from God. We can't imagine the suffering that went with this. But then as the scriptures say He was "quickened by the Spirit", that is, He was made alive by the Spirit. His soul was not left in hell but was re-united with His body and He was resurrected.

In the process of resurrection, Jesus brought with Him the righteous which were in paradise awaiting the time when they could be in the presence of God. Some of these received their resurrected bodies just as Jesus did.

Matthew 27:52-53 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, (53) And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

While this is largely ignored by bible teachers, it is important because Jesus rose on the day of the First Fruits Offering, the Wave Offering. The first fruits were presented to the Lord so that the entire harvest would be holy.

Changes for the New Testament Righteous

When Jesus rose the paradise compartment of *sheol* was emptied and the souls of the Old Testament righteous are now with Jesus in heaven. Because we are now made acceptable to God by the blood of Jesus, we, too, are with Jesus when we die.

2 Corinthians 5:6-8 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (7) (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) (8) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from

the body, and to be present with the Lord.

Philippians 1:22-24 But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor: yet what I shall choose I wot not. (23) For I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: (24) Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.

Paul makes it clear that, for him and therefore all who belong to Christ, when a person's soul is absent from the body then it will be present with the Lord.

From this we know that when we die, our souls do not go to sheol, but, instead, go into the presence of Jesus in heaven.

Resurrection Body

When we are resurrected our spirits and souls are re-united with our bodies. It is the same body we had when we died only changed. God keeps track of all of our elemental components so that they can be assembled again at the right time.

The Psalmist records the original process that occurred before birth. A record was kept so that in the resurrection the process could be duplicated in a moment.

Psalms 139:13-16 For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. (14) I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. (15) My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. (16) Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

When Jesus appeared to His disciples, He had the same body that was crucified as evidenced by the wounds on the hands and feet. They at first thought that He was a spirit but He quickly set them straight on that.

1 Cor. 15:35-44 But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? (36) Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: (37) And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: (38) But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. (39) All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. (40) There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. (41) There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. (42) So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: (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. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

When our natural body is sown into the ground like seed, it is raised as a spiritual body.

Abilities that we can expect of our resurrected bodies (our example is Jesus):

1. appear and disappear at will
2. enter closed rooms
3. pass between heaven and earth.

The Order of Resurrection

1 Cor. 15:22-24 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (23) But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. (24) Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

Regardless of any particular belief that you might hold about the timing of various events such as the Rapture, the order will always be the same and it is a three step process.

Christ the first fruits: As we have already seen, many old testament saints rose from their graves and walked the streets of Jerusalem before ascending to heaven with Jesus. Christ was planted as a seed and rose in newness of Life. When you plant a seed, you don't just get one seed back but instead you get many. Jesus and the old testament saints were the wave offering of the first fruits to God.

Leviticus 23:10-11 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: (11) And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.

John 12:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

They that are Christ's at His coming: All true Christians will be resurrected in their new immortal bodies and those still alive when He comes will receive their new bodies also. This is the next event to occur in the resurrection process.

1 Cor. 15:51-54 Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, (52) In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. (53) For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. (54) So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death

is swallowed up in victory.

Then comes the end: This occurs when the Kingdom is delivered to the Father. The timeline for this is after the 1000 year reign of Christ on the earth.

Revelation 20:5-6 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. (6) Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

After everything is completed at the end of the 1000 years, then the rest of the dead are raised for the Great White Throne judgment.

Five Main Purposes of Christ's Second Coming

(1) Christ will come for the Church. He will come as the Bridegroom to receive to Himself all true believers as His Bride.

John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

(2) Christ will come for the national salvation of Israel. The remnant of Israel that survives the fires of the great tribulation will acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah

Romans 11:26-27 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: (27) For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

(3) Christ will come for the overthrow of Anti-Christ and of Satan

2 Thessalonians 2:8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

(4) Christ will come for the judgment of the gentile nations.

Matthew 25:31-32 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: (32) And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

(5) Christ will come for the establishment of His millennial kingdom upon the earth

Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

There is much argument among believers about the details of these phases of the Lord's return and the fulfillment of His purposes. Will all of these be a single event? Or, will there be definite time intervals between some of them?

1 Thes. 4:13-17 (13) But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. (14) For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. (15) For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. (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: (17) Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

There are 3 sounds associated with the Lord's return:

1. the shout of the Lord--only the Lord has the power to call the dead out of their graves;
2. the voice of the Archangel--possibly Gabriel (herald);
3. the trumpet of God--all through the bible, the trumpet call signaled the gathering together of God's people.

Jesus said that He would also come as a thief.

Revelation 16:15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

Like a thief:

1. sudden, unexpected, without warning
2. culminates in a single ruthless action of snatching away earth's most valuable treasure snatched--the true Christians.

Difference from a thief: Jesus only takes His own.