

Talkback

Jesus is coming back #4

The Hope



Christ Church
HAYWARDS HEATH

Resisting Plato



Bible doctrine:

- Creation – all God made was good
- Human Beings – bodily beings made in the image of God to rule over creation
- Incarnation – God has taken bodily humanity to himself
- Resurrection – Jesus was raised with a body of flesh and bone

Luke 24:39-43

³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

⁴⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. ⁴¹ And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?"

⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate it in their presence.

The God who restores



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God's work

- Restoration
- Redemption
- Reconciliation
- Renewal
- Regeneration
- Resurrection



Rom 8:21, 23

- ²¹ the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.
- ²³ 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.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Everything will be glorified even nature itself. And that seems to me to be the Biblical teaching about the eternal state: that what we call heaven is life in this perfect world as God intended humanity to live it. When he put Adam in Paradise at the beginning, Adam fell and all fell with him, but men and women are meant to live in the body, and will live in a glorified body in a glorified world, and God will be with them.



Our immediate hope - Life after death the intermediate state



What happens to Christians after they die?

- They 'depart the body' and go to be 'with Christ' in 'paradise' while their bodies 'sleep'

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

- Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. ¹⁴ We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. ¹⁵ According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

- ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord for ever. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage each other with these words.

Luke 23:42-43

- ⁴² Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." ⁴³ Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

Revelation 6:9-10

- 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. ¹⁰ 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?"

Philippians 1:21-24

- For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.²² If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labour for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know!²³ I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far;²⁴ but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.

What happens to Christians after they die?

- They 'depart the body' and go to be 'with Christ' in 'paradise' while their bodies 'sleep'
- Even this blessed existence falls short of the bodily existence for which we were made

2 Corinthians 5:1-9

- Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.² Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling,³ because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked.⁴ For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

2 Corinthians 5:1-9

- ⁵ Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. ⁶ Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. ⁷ We live by faith, not by sight. ⁸ We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹ So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.



Our ultimate hope –
life after life after death
bodily life after the resurrection



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1 Corinthians 15:42-44,49

- So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; ⁴³ it is sown in dishonour, 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... ⁴⁹ And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

1 Corinthians 15:51-53

- Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—⁵² in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.



A new heaven and a new earth



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The renewal of creation is an image of great hope for us

- no more curse; no more futility and frustration; no more disease, decay or death; no more sin or sorrow (Rev 21:4)
- a place where righteousness dwells (2Pet 3:13)
- a place where God and redeemed humanity live together (Rev 21:3)

Rev 22:1-5 expands on this...

- Life flows from the sovereign rule of God
 - The nations will be healed
 - Face to face relationship with God
 - Life lived in his service
 - We will reign for ever
-
- not a change of purpose for our humanity
but it's fulfilment

- *What we need is not to be rescued from the world, not to cease being human, not to stop caring for the world, not to stop shaping human culture. What we need is the power to do these things according to the will of God. We, as well as the rest of creation, need to be redeemed.*

Paul Marshall with Lela Gilbert, *Heaven is not my home* (Word: 1998); pp.32-33

- *Heaven, as the eternal home of the divine Man and of all the redeemed members of the human race, must necessarily be thoroughly human in its structure, conditions, and activities. Its joys and activities must all be rational, moral, emotional, voluntary and active. There must be the exercise of all the faculties, the gratification of all tastes, the development of all talent capacities, the realization of all ideals.*

- *The reason, the intellectual curiosity, the imagination, the aesthetic instincts, the holy affections, the social affinities, the inexhaustible resources of strength and power native to the human soul must all find in heaven exercise and satisfaction. Then there must always be a goal of endeavour before us, ever future Heaven will prove the consummate flower and fruit of the whole creation and of all the history of the universe.*

A.A. Hodge, *Evangelical Theology: A Course of Popular Lectures (Banner of Truth: 1976); pp.399-402*



A New Jerusalem



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a New Jerusalem

- a societal image
- an image of fellowship with God
- a dynamic image

a New Jerusalem

- a place of both perfect rest and fruitful work
 - a distorted view of spirituality denies our humanity and falsely constrains our view of heaven
 - a limited view of worship falsely constrains our view of heaven
- the achievements of human society and culture in this world will be retained and redeemed?

a New Jerusalem

- a place of laughter
 - *If you're not allowed to laugh in heaven, I don't want to go there.*
 - Martin Luther
 - *Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.*
 - Jesus, *Luke 6:21*

a wedding feast

- the city is also the bride
- an image of celebration; of joyful and unhindered fellowship with Christ
- a perfected bride (the church) united forever with her bridegroom (Christ)

Ephesians 5:25-27

- ...loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

*The bride eyes not her garment,
but her dear Bridegroom's face;
I will not gaze at glory,
but on my King of grace;
not at the crown he gives me,
but on his nail-pierced hand;
the Lamb is all the glory
of Immanuel's land.*

from 'The sands of time are sinking' by Anne Ross Cousin (1824-1906) alt.