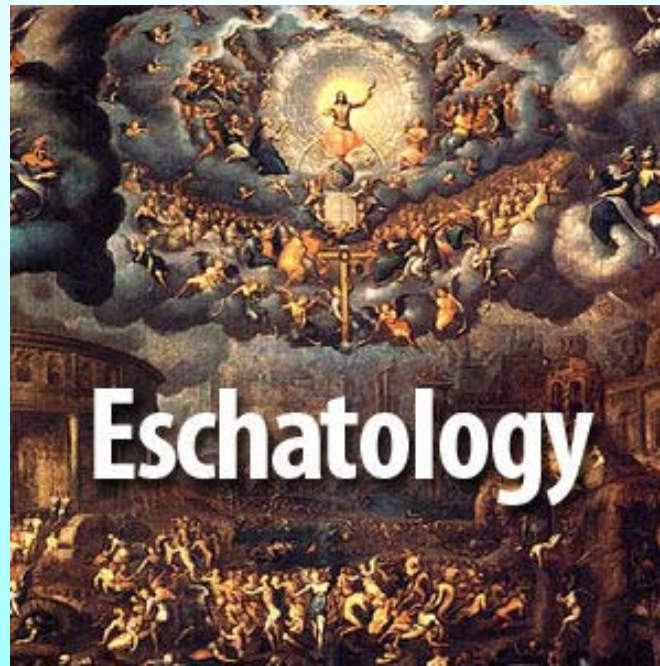


WEEK THREE: SUB TOPICS IN ESCHATOLOGY



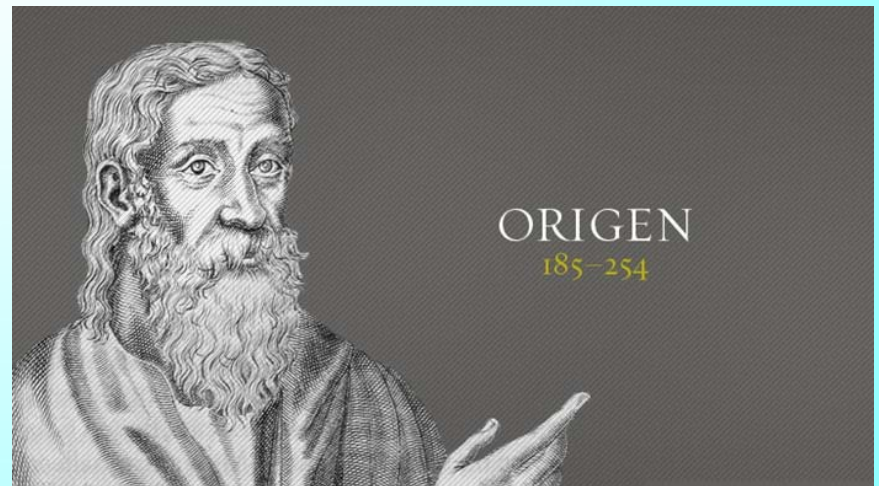
WHAT HAPPENS TO US WHEN WE DIE?



- We read our preconceived ideas into the biblical text. People imagine heaven as a place with endless recreation.
- If we read the biblical text closely, we encounter a very different understanding of what happens to us when we die.
- God should be the focus of our understanding of what happens whenever we die.
- The afterlife is a “two stage” process. We will discuss this today!

UNHEALTHY VIEWS

- Dualism: The belief that for the “soul” to escape from the body is good. In the early church, this was named Gnosticism.
- No talk of resurrection until very late in the Old Testament.
- “This world” doesn’t matter at all, it will “pass away”.



WHY RESURRECTION IN THE FIRST PLACE?

- All theistic faiths affirm the goodness of creation.
- Whenever Adam sinned (Genesis 3), the cosmos/creation was fractured (Romans 8). This is why we feel a sense of restlessness in our hearts.
- If God does not raise us from the dead and redeem creation, sin is greater than God!



INTERMEDIATE STATE



- Scripture, surprisingly, speaks very little about the “intermediate state”. The emphasis is on the resurrection of Jesus and final judgement of the living and the dead.
- There are three options. They are conscious existence, soul sleep, and purgatory.
- We will investigate these three views!

PURGATORY

- The doctrine of purgatory is official Roman Catholic teaching. However, Pope Benedict questioned it!
- Souls – upon death – go to purgatory to be "purged" from sin. This view comes from Origen, Plato, and the Greco Roman world. It has not basis in Scripture!
- This view demolishes the notion as Christ as complete Mediator between God and man.



SOUL SLEEP



The evidence for Jesus' resurrection is so strong that nobody would question it except for two things: First, it is a very unusual event. And second, if you believe it happened, you have to change the way you live.

— Wolfhart Pannenberg —

AZ QUOTES

- “Upon death, the soul enjoys neither heaven nor hell during the intermediate state, but unconsciousness until the final judgement”. Michael Horton
- Two respectable – in the last generation – held to this view. They are G. C. Berkouwer and Wolfhart Pannenberg. Both want to affirm the goodness of creation and the body of humans.
- This view, in my opinion, is the most “textualist” version of the intermediate state.
- My understanding is that you die and the next conscious moment you have is the final judgement.
- Calvin wrote against this view. The documents name was Pschopannychia.

CONSCIOUS EXISTENCE

- Believers still live in a state of “already but not yet” in heaven (James 2 Corinthians 5:8; Rev 6:9-10).
- Believers are not “complete” without their body to worship God fully. There is a longing for the body and glorified state (Romans 8).
- Traditional view of the church and Protestant Reformers (WCF).



THE RENEWAL OF CREATION

- The renewal of creation follows the final judgement. According to Scripture the present world will neither continue forever nor will it be destroyed and replaced by a totally new one. Instead it will be cleansed of sin and re-created, reborn, renewed, made whole. While the kingdom of God is first planted spiritually in human hearts, the future blessedness is not to be spiritualized. Biblical hope, rooted in incarnation and resurrection, is creational, this worldly, visible, physical, bodily hope. Herman Bavinck



ROMANS 8: 18-25

- ¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ **For the creation** waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ **For the creation** was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that **the creation** itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the **whole creation** has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only **the creation**, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

ROMANS 8:18-25 CONTINUED

- “With the majority of modern commentators, then, I think that creation here denotes the “subhuman” creation. Like the Psalmist and prophets who picture hills, meadows, and valleys shouting and singing together for joy (Psalm 65:12-13) and the earth mourning (Isaiah 24:4; Jeremiah 4:28; 12:4), Paul personifies the subhuman creation in order to convey to his readers a sense of the cosmic significance of both humanity’s fall into sin and the believer’s restoration to glory”. Douglas Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*, 514.



ROMANS 8:18-25 CONTINUED



- Adam's sin was cosmic in its scope. Sin doesn't only effect human beings. It effects all of creation.
- This goes back to the doctrine of God. God has to re-create creation because He is greater than sin. Sin does not lock Him into a box!
- Perhaps higher forms of animals will be raised to life (speculative)!

NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH (REV 21:1-8)

- Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”
- ⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” ⁶ And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. ⁷ The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. ⁸ But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

REV 21:1-8 CONTINUED



- “The sea is no more” chaos and destruction are gone. “The sea” is routinely referred to as evil space (Leviathan) in the Old Testament.
- What was fractured (heaven and earth) is put back in place.
- New creation is superior than what was lost in the garden.
- Old Testament texts – particular the prophet – are in the background. This demonstrates the redemptive vision of the Bible.

PILGRIMS PASSING ON OUR WAY

- The age we live in and the age to come have some similarities and dissimilarities.
- 1,2,3 John has taught RPC about a “heavenly mindedness” of the Christian faith.
- This should impact our daily lives. Christians should be “heavenly” oriented. We should long for the return of our king.
- The New Heavens and New Earth are a place for people who love God. Not want to get out of hell.
- There is no mention of retirement, golf, fishing, shopping, or any other social imaginary we place onto heaven.

