

Resurrection, Judgment, and the Final State

“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27).

There are several resurrections that could be inferred from scriptures and several stages to what we call the first resurrection. There are also several corporate judgments for groups such as the nations (Matthew 25:31–46). However, in this lesson we will deal only with the resurrections and judgments that will be likely to affect you as an individual.

There are essentially two resurrections, two judgments, and two final states possible for each individual. You may exercise your free will to select the outcome that you prefer. If you have been saved, you have already made this selection.

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves 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 damnation” (John 5:28–29).

I. The First Resurrection

We have discussed the post-death state of the soul and the spirit in lesson 8. In that lesson we established that when you die and are not saved, your spirit returns to God, your soul is condemned to eternal damnation and your body goes to the grave. Happily, God has graciously provided a way to escape this terrible outcome.

For a saved person, your spirit remains in its state of communion with the Holy Spirit of God, your soul ascends to heaven to be with our Lord, and your body enters the grave to await the midtribulation rapture when it will be reunited in a glorified state with your soul and spirit (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Therefore in this lesson we will deal only with the resurrection of the physical body. Contrary to what some may teach, the resurrection of the body is well established in scripture.

“And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God” (Job 19:26).

*Acts 2:31; Romans 6:5; John 5:28–29; Acts 24:15;
Romans 1:4; 1 Corinthians 15:27; Hebrews 11:35*

There are two possible resurrections for every person. These are the first resurrection and the general resurrection. The first resurrection includes ONLY the RIGHTEOUS dead. It takes place in three stages, one of which has already occurred as recorded in 1 Corinthians 15:20–23.

A. The harvest analogy

In the scriptures, the first resurrection has been compared to the traditional harvests in ancient Israel. This provides an easy method for describing an otherwise confusing sequence of events.

The harvest was to be gathered in three distinct increments according to the law given to Moses as found in Leviticus 23:9–22. The earliest crop to ripen was barley and per Leviticus 23:9–14, a sheaf of the very first of the barley harvest had to be brought to the priest for an offering to the Lord on the first Sabbath after it was cut. This was called the firstfruits of the harvest.

Over the next 50 days all the rest of the crops, including the later grains, were to be harvested. When the harvest was over, the Israelites had to bring the first loaves of bread baked from the newly harvested wheat to the priest as the firstfruits of the entire harvest.

Whenever the Israelites harvested any crops, they were warned not to gather everything in the field or vineyard. They were commanded to leave some for the poor and the strangers among them to gather for their own use. This remaining portion was called the gleanings (Leviticus 23:22; Leviticus 19:9–10).

Thus the three divisions of the ingathering of the crops were called the firstfruits, the harvest, and the gleanings. As you can see from the chart and references below, the first resurrection or ingathering of the saints precisely follows this pattern.

<i>Time</i>	3 Days After the Crucifixion	Middle of Tribulation	End of Tribulation	End of Millennium
<i>Resurrection</i>	1st Resurrection (Firstfruits)	1st Resurrection (Harvest)	1st Resurrection (Gleanings)	2nd or General Resurrection
<i>Judgment</i>	None	Judgment Seat of Christ	Judgment Seat of Christ	Great White Throne
<i>References</i>	1 Corinthians 15:20– 23	Revelation 11:18; 14:14–16	Revelation 19:4–5	Revelation 20:11–15

B. Christ the firstfruits

After His death on the cross, Christ descended into hell. While there, He preached the gospel to the ‘captives’ in a part of hell called “Abraham’s Bosom” (Luke 16:22) and then rose from the grave bringing some of the righteous dead with Him.

1 Peter 3:18–19; Acts 2:31; Matthew 27:53

C. They that are Christ’s at His coming (the harvest)

This stage of the first resurrection will occur at the seventh trumpet judgment midway through the tribulation.

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 11:15).

“And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth” (Revelation 11:18).

This resurrection coincides with the final rapture of the Church. It includes all the righteous dead up to this point. As the verse indicates, it is immediately followed by the judgment seat of Christ.

*Daniel 12:1–3; Luke 14:1 Corinthians 15:51–52;
1 Thessalonians 4:13–18*

D. The start of the millennium (the gleanings)

“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 worshipped 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. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 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” (Revelation 20:4–6).

There is a saying that Christians like to repeat. It says “Born twice, die once. Born once, die twice.” It is food for poignant, sobering thought.

This resurrection, immediately prior to the millennium, concludes the first resurrection. All who have suffered for the cause of Christ during the great tribulation are raised at this time to reign on Earth with their Lord.

2 Timothy 2:12–13; Matthew 16:27

II. The General Resurrection

This resurrection will primarily be concerned with the wicked dead of all ages. Although there possibly will be some righteous dead from among those that were saved during the great tribulation along with some that may die during the millennium (Revelation 20:5).

A. The time of the General Resurrection

After Christ has reigned as King for 1000 years, the millennial age will come to an end. The present universe will be destroyed by fire (2 Peter 3:7) and a brand new one created which will be the abode of man forever in his final state. Between the end of the millennium and the time that the universe is re-created, there will be one final resurrection.

“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. . .” (Revelation 20:5).

B. Who will be resurrected

Just prior to this re-creation, the final state of all people that have ever lived will be determined at the Great White Throne judgment. In order to do this, God will resurrect every man, woman, and child that has not been previously resurrected.

*“And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works”
(Revelation 20:13).*

III. The Judgment Seat of Christ

There are only two judgments that we as individuals need concern ourselves with. We will all have to face one of them. The Judgment Seat of Christ applies only to those who are saved. Speaking to Christians, Paul wrote:

“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” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

This is a judgment for the righteous only. It will include all the righteous from all past ages or dispensations. This judgment will occur on two different occasions corresponding to the harvest and gleanings stages of the first resurrection.

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom” (2 Timothy 4:1).

These people are all assured of heaven so their final destination is not the subject of this judgment. This judgment is concerned only with rewards and crowns for good works done in the body after salvation. These rewards are reduced for unconfessed sins committed after salvation (1 John 1:9). God is very just and therefore the penalties for evil works will be severe as seen in the following verse. Here the above quoted passage continues:

*“Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences”
(2 Corinthians 5:11).*

1 Corinthians 3:12–15; Mal. 3:16–17; Romans 14:10

A. The seventh trump judgment

The seventh trump judgment occurs right after the seventh trump resurrection and rapture of the Church.

Luke 14:14; 1 Corinthians 15:51–52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

B. The premillennial judgment

Those who have earned the right to reign with Christ during the millennium by suffering and dying for His sake during the great tribulation will be resurrected and judged at this time. They will then take their place with those previously resurrected at the seventh trump.

Revelation 20:4–6; Matthew 16:27

C. What is judged?

1. Works: 1 Corinthians 3:11–15; 2 Corinthians 5:10–11; Jas. 2:17–26; 1 Corinthians 13
2. Words: Matthew 12:36–37
3. Thoughts: Matthew 5:28; Matthew 15:19–20
4. Secrets: Romans 2:16
5. Motives: Matthew 5:28; Acts 8:18–21

D. Rewards—the five crowns

There are five types of crowns awarded for faithful service in specific areas mentioned in the Bible

1. The Crown of Life: James 1:12; Revelation 2:10
This crown is often called the martyr's crown because it is given to those who suffer victoriously for their faith.
2. The Crown of Glory: 1 Peter 5:2–4
This is also called the elder's or pastor's crown. It is earned for shepherding the flock of Christ with a proper heart attitude.

3. The Crown of Rejoicing: 1 Thessalonians 2:19–20; Philippians 4:1
This is frequently called the soul winner's crown. It is awarded to those that lead others to Christ
4. The Crown of Righteousness: 2 Tim. 4:8
This crown is awarded to those who are taken in the prewrath rapture because they have been obedient in eagerly watching for their Lord and living righteously.
5. The Incorruptible Crown: 1 Corinthians 9:25–27
This is also called the victor's crown. It is awarded to those who live overcoming, victorious Christian lives.

E. Other rewards mentioned in scripture

The crowns are just some of the rewards available to those that are zealous of righteous works for the Lord. They also get:

1. To be with Christ: John 14:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:17
2. To behold His glory: Psalms 17:15; John 17:24; 2 Corinthians 4:6
3. To be glorified with Christ: Romans 8:17–18
4. To reign with Christ: 2 Timothy 2:12; Matthew 25:20–23; Luke 19:12–19
5. To shine as the stars: Daniel 12:3

F. Loss of rewards

The possibility of these glorious rewards should spur us to work the works of God in this life. Another thing that may make us live very carefully is the possibility of the loss of all these things through evil works. The Bible tells us that many will appear before the Lord with nothing to offer. They will be naked and ashamed in His presence and before all the rest of the righteous.

1 John 2:28; Revelation 3:15–18; Revelation 16:15

IV. The Great White Throne Judgment

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13–14).

Just like at the Judgment Seat of Christ, every man’s works will be judged. They will determine what degree of glory the people of God (it is unclear whether there are any people of God) will receive and what degree of punishment the wicked will receive.

Galatians 6:7–8

A. The time of the Great White Throne judgment

The Great White Throne judgment will occur immediately after the general resurrection at the end of the millennium.

B. The place of the Great White Throne judgment

This will apparently take place in some place between heaven and the created universe.

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them” (Revelation 20:11).

C. What will be judged?

1. Every work: Ecclesiastes 12:14
2. Every secret thing: Ecclesiastes 12:14
3. Every idle word: Matthew 12:36

V. Heaven

Heaven is the final destination or the final state of every person who has been made righteous through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. There are many parts to heaven mentioned in the Bible. We, as Christians, will apparently dwell in the city called New Jerusalem. However, the indication is that we will be welcome in every part of heaven.

A. The gate of heaven

When the Old Testament patriarch, Jacob, was traveling to Haran, he laid down to rest one night in the place where Abraham had built his first altar to the Lord after entering Canaan. He had a dream of angels ascending and descending on a ladder to heaven (Gen 28:12–17). When he awoke, he had this insight:

“And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven” (Genesis 28:17).

B. Paradise

This is the place where Jesus promised to meet with the repentant thief on the cross after their death. At that time it was located within the Earth but shortly after that Jesus took it to heaven. Here the souls of the righteous dead wait in blissful peace for the resurrection at which time they will be reunited with the body.

Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 12:2–4; Revelation 2:7; Psalms 68:18; Ephesians 4:8

C. The throne room

The throne of God is set before the “mount of the congregation” in a place called “the sides of the north.”

“For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north” (Isaiah 14:13).

Psalms 48:2; Psalms 103:19; Hebrews 4:16; Hebrews 12:2; Revelation 4:2–11; Revelation 5, 7, 22

D. The heavenly Temple

When God gave Moses the dimensions for the Tabernacle in the wilderness and later the Temple built by Solomon, He gave them measurements corresponding to the heavenly Temple. The earthly buildings were but a shadow of the heavenly Temple.

*Psalms 11:4; Hebrews 8:5; Hebrews 9:11–12, 22–26;
Revelation 11:19*

E. The future address of all of God's people

All of those who are saved in this world are citizens of the heavenly kingdom. We no longer fit in this world and, in fact, we are pilgrims and strangers in a strange land. If you feel too much at home and too comfortable in this world, you need to find out what is wrong with your relationship to your God. The Bible specifically tells us we cannot get along with the present world (James 4:4; John 15:18–20; John 17:14–17).

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Hebrews 11:13).

1. Country—The Heavenly Country

“But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city” (Hebrews 11:16).

2. State—Perfection

When Christians get to heaven they will have a perfect body that can never be sick or injured. They will also have a perfect soul that will have no desire to sin. Our only desire will be to please our Savior and King. There will be no more struggles with the desires of the flesh in this world.

*John 17:23; Colossians 1:28; Hebrews 6:1; Hebrews 10:14;
1 Peter 5:10*

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13).

Isaiah 25:8; 35:10; 61:3; Revelation 7:17; Revelation 21:4

3. City—New Jerusalem

Christians will specifically serve Christ in eternity. They will dwell in the Holy City called New Jerusalem.

*John 14:3; Hebrews 11:10; Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 3:12;
Revelation 21:2; Revelation 21:9–22:5*

4. Street—Pure Gold

“And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass” (Revelation 21:21).

5. House—A Mansion

“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 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” (John 14:2–3).

VI. Hell

The souls of the unrighteous dead are currently in a place inside the Earth called hell. This, however is a temporary residence. According to Revelation 20:14–15, hell itself will be cast into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the final destination of all men who have not accepted Christ's atonement for their sins. Hell, like heaven is composed of several parts or compartments.

A. The existence of hell

Some cultists teach that there is no such place as hell. They believe that the wicked simply cease to exist at death. If this were the case, then Jesus Christ would no longer exist because He took on Himself the guilt for all the sins of the world. Jesus obviously has not ceased to exist. Beyond this, the Bible clearly states that hell exists and is the place where all the souls of the wicked dead currently reside.

1. Hell exists and the souls of the wicked dead are there

Deuteronomy 32:22; Psalms 9:17; Matthew 10:28; Luke 12:5; Luke 16:27

2. Jesus Christ was in hell

Although He had never sinned, Jesus took on Himself the guilt for all sin. The punishment for unatoned sin is hell and Jesus was thus punished. However, hell could not hold Him. He rose from the dead and brought the keys of death and hell with Him (Revelation 1:18).

2 Samuel 22:4–7; Psalms 16:10; Psalms 86:13; Acts 2:27,31; Ephesians 4:8–10; Colossians 2:15

3. Hell is inside the Earth

Amos 9:2

4. Hell is a place of torment

Luke 16:23–24; Revelation 14:9–11; Revelation 20:10

5. There are levels of hell

Deuteronomy 32:22; Psalms 86:13

6. People in hell are referred to as worms

There is some evidence that people in hell come to resemble a worm. There are verses that speak of angels being chained in hell and people being bound hand and foot in hell. A man whose feet and

hands are tied together would only be able to wiggle to get around and would, as his muscles atrophied over time, come to resemble a worm.

Isaiah 66:24; Matthew 22:12–13; Mark 9:43–48; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Revelation 20:1–3

7. The wicked will exist in hell forever

“And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:43–44).

8. Hell will enlarge itself to receive the souls of many more wicked dead at the end of the world to the point where it will break through the surface

Isaiah 5:14; 14:9; 66:24; Habakkuk 2:5

B. There are compartments in hell

1. Abraham’s bosom

This appears to be the place where the souls of the righteous dead stayed before Jesus took them with Him to paradise.

Luke 16:20–31

2. The great gulf or bottomless pit

The bottomless pit is apparently in the very center of the Earth. That is the only place that is actually bottomless. If you fall to the center of the Earth, gravity would be equal in every direction and you could not “fall” in any direction. If the very center of the Earth is hollow (which it must be), then you would be suspended in a “bottomless” place.

Numbers 16:30–33; Isaiah 38:17–18; Ezekiel 26:20;

Luke 16:26; Revelation 9:1–2, 11

3. The place where the angels who left their first estate are kept

These angels are probably the ones that were referred to as the sons of God that went in unto the daughters of men in Genesis 6:1–5.

2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6

C. The people in hell can be seen for all eternity somewhere outside of New Jerusalem.

“And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh” (Isaiah 66:24).

D. The lake of fire

After the Great White Throne judgment, death and hell will be cast into the lake of fire. This apparently is what can be seen from the entrance to New Jerusalem. It is a physical lake of burning fire that will exist on the new Earth.

Revelation 19:20; 20:10, 14–15; 21:8; Isaiah 66:24

