

Death & Afterlife

Session 3: Resurrection and Judgment

The General Resurrection

Isaiah 26:19, SAAS

The dead shall rise up; and those in the tombs shall arise.

John 5:25-29, RSV

[The Lord said:] "Truly, truly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son also to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear His voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment.

Nicene Creed

I look for the resurrection of the dead,
And the life of the world [or, age] to come.

St John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* 4.27

We also believe in the resurrection of the dead, for there really will be one, there will be a resurrection of the dead. Now, when we say resurrection, we mean a resurrection of bodies.

Luke 24:37-39, RSV

But they were startled and frightened, and supposed that they saw a spirit. And [Jesus] said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do questionings rise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have."

1 Corinthians 15:51-53, RSV

Lo! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on immortality.

1 Thessalonians 4:14-17, RSV

For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord.

St. Justin the Martyr, *On the Resurrection* 8

But, in truth, [God] has even called the flesh to the resurrection, and promises to it everlasting life. For where He promises to save man, there He gives the promise to the flesh. For what is man but the reasonable animal composed of body and soul? Is the soul by itself man? No; but the soul of man. Would the body be called man? No, but it is called the body of man. If, then, neither of these is by itself man, but that which is made up of the two together is called man, and God has called man to life and resurrection, He has called not a part, but the whole, which is the soul and the body.

St John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* 4.27

If the soul had engaged alone in the contest of virtue, then it would also be crowned alone; and if it alone had indulged in pleasures, then it alone could be justly punished. However, since the soul followed neither virtue nor vice without the body, it will be just for them to receive their recompense together.

Incorruptible Bodies

St Athenagoras the Apologist , *The Resurrection of the Dead* 25

...the man cannot be said to exist when the body is dissolved, and indeed entirely scattered abroad, even though the soul continue by itself—it is absolutely necessary that the end of a man's being should appear in some reconstitution of the two together, and of the same living being. And as this follows of necessity, there must by all means be a resurrection of the bodies which are dead, or even entirely dissolved, and the same men must be formed anew...but it is impossible for the same men to be reconstituted unless the same bodies are restored to the same souls.

Philippians 3:20-21, NKJV

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

Romans 8:21-23, RSV

The creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

St Maximus the Confessor, *Mystagogia*

Then the world, like man, will die in its manifestation and in the blink of an eye will be restored again from its decrepitude at our resurrection. Then man, like a part with the whole and like the small with the great, will be co-resurrected with the world, having received back the virtue of intransient incorruption.

Matthew 22:30, RSV

[The Lord said:] “In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.”

St John Chrysostom, *Homily 5 on Romans*

All of us are to rise incorruptible, but not all to glory, but some to punishment, and some to life.

The Last Judgment

John 5:22,27, RSV

[The Lord said:] “The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son... and has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man.”

Matthew 7:21, RSV

[The Lord said:] "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 16:27, RSV

[The Lord said:] "For the Son of man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay every man for what he has done."

Matthew 25:31-46 – Parable of the Sheep and the Goats

Romans 2:6-10, RSV

For he will render to every man according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are factious and do not obey the truth, but obey wickedness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil,...but glory and honor and peace for every one who does good

John 5:26-29 (see above)

Revelation 20:12, RSV

And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Also another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, by what they had done.

Revelation 22:12, RSV

[The Lord said:] "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay every one for what he has done."

1 John 1:9, RSV

If we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 Corinthians 11:31, NKJV

For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.

Moment of Truth

Luke 12:2-3, RSV

[The Lord said:] “Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.”

1 Corinthians 4:5, RSV

Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then every man will receive his commendation from God.

The Octoechos, Tone 3, Monday Matins, 1st Kathisma

At the dread Judgment I shall be convicted without accusers, and condemned without witnesses; for the book of my conscience will be opened and my hidden works revealed.

John 12:47-48, RSV

[The Lord said:] "If anyone hears my sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. He who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has a judge; the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day."

St Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechical Lecture 15.25*

Out of thine own conscience shalt thou be judged, thy *thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men* [Romans 2:15-16]. The terrible countenance of the Judge will force thee to speak the truth; or rather, even though thou speak not, it will convict thee. For thou shalt rise clothed with thine own sins, or else with thy righteous deeds.



"The Prepared Throne"

St Isaac the Syrian, *On the Divine Mysteries*

There is no coercion of any kind, but no one will inherit glory against their will, nor will they inherit it without repentance; but all are welcome to God's wisdom by choosing good by their free will and thus gaining access to Him.

St Silouan in *St Silouan the Athonite 386*

[The Lord's] glory shall each man behold according to the measure of his love. The more a man loves, the more ardently does he set his face towards God, yearning to be with the Beloved Lord, and therefore will he approach the nearer to Him; while the man who loves but little will have but little desire for the Lord, and the man who does not love at all will neither wish nor aspire to see the Lord, and will spend his life in darkness.

John 12:26, RSV

Jesus said: "If any one serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be also..."

Hell: Eternal Death

Matthew 25:34,41, RSV

[The Lord said:] "Then the King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom **prepared for you from the foundation of the world;**'..."

Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire **prepared for the devil and his angels;**'"

St Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies* 5.27.2

On as many as, according to their own choice, depart from God, He inflicts that separation from Himself which they have chosen of their own accord. But separation from God is death, and separation from light is darkness; and separation from God consists in the loss of all the benefits which He has in store.

Nikolaos P. Vassiliadis, *The Mystery of Death* 526

God never violates our freedom. Thus, the justice of God comes to punish a condition that the sinner chooses freely and in which he remains freely; or, more correctly, in which he insists in remaining, impudently and satanically violating the holy will of God! Therefore hell is the continuation of the unrepentance of man; hell is realized in man, by man himself!

St Maximus the Confessor, *Epistle* 4

They will take the eternal fire and darkness and insatiable worm, they will gnash their teeth and weep unceasingly and be in endless terror, from which every damned person will strive for endless torture all the more for eternity, rather than any other acceptable form of punishment.

2 Peter 1:3, RSV

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness....

1 Timothy 2:3-4, RSV

God our Savior... desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

The Punishments

St John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Matthew 23.9*

Better surely to endure a thousand thunderbolts, than to see that face of mildness turning away from us, and that eye of peace not enduring to look upon us.

St Justin Popovitch, *Man and God-Man*

[There is] no greater terror than eternity without Christ...For where Christ is not present, there everything is changed into a curse, to bitterness and horror.

2 Thessalonians 1:9-10, NKJV

These will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence [literally, "face"] of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints....

Metropolitan HILARION (Alfeyev), *Orthodox Christianity* Vol. 2, page 546

The reason for the torment of sinners is not God's anger and not the absence of God's love, but their own incapacity to perceive God's love and the divine light as sources of joy and delight. This incapability flows from the spiritual-moral choice that a person made during earthly life.

Elder Sphrony (Sakharov), *St Silouan the Athonite 148*

Even in hell Divine love will embrace all men, but, while this love is joy and life for them that love God, it is torment for those that hate Him.

Matthew 25:30, RSV

... the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.

2 Peter 2:17 and Jude 13, RSV

...the nether gloom of darkness...

Mark 9:47-48, RSV

hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.

Luke 12:47-48, RSV

[The Lord said:] "That servant who knew his master's will, but did not make ready or act according to his will, shall receive a severe beating. But he who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, shall receive a light beating. Every one to whom much is given, of him will much be required; and of him to whom men commit much they will demand the more."

Eternal Life

1 Corinthians 13:12, RSV

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood.

St Symeon the New Theologian

Christ Himself will be seen by all and He Himself will be looking upon all the innumerable myriads and remain observing steadily everyone, and to each one of them it will seem that Christ is gazing upon him and enjoying his conversation. Moreover, each one will be embraced by His love so that not a single person will feel sorrowful because Christ ignored or overlooked him.... Christ Himself will also be a crown, to crown the heads of all the saints. And without being altered to become someone other than Himself, He will appear differently to each person, sharing Himself with each one as is appropriate to Him and as each person is worthy.

St Gregory the Theologian, *Oration* 30.6

"God will be all in all" [1 Cor 15:28] at the time of restoration...when we are no longer what we are now, a multiplicity of impulses and emotions, with little or nothing of God in us, but are fully like God, with room for God and God alone. This is the "maturity" towards which we speed.

St Symeon the New Theologian, Theological Homilies

As the Saints become similar to God they will know God as much as God has known them, and as the Father knows the Son, and the Son knows the Father, so also shall the Saints see and recognize each other. But even those who never saw each other bodily in this world, will actually meet there.

Isaiah 35:10, SAAS

And those gathered by the Lord shall return and come to Zion with gladness, and with everlasting gladness over their head. For praise and exceeding joy will be on their head, and gladness shall possess them. Pain, sorrow, and sighing fled away.

St Basil the Great, *On Psalm 104*

That land is of the living where night does not exist and where there is no sleep, the imitation of death. There, there is no material eating and drinking - the supports of our weakness; there are no sicknesses, no pains, no medicines, no courts of law, no businesses, no crafts, and no money - the beginning of evils, the subject of wars, and the root of enmity. It is the land of the living, not of [those] dying because of sin, but of [those] living the true life in Christ Jesus.