

## The Doctrine of Sanctification – Part Two

### I. The Doctrine of the Intermediate State

Luke 23:39-43 (See also 2 Cor. 12:4; Rev. 2:7)

John 11:25-26

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

2 Corinthians 5:1-9

As the *ESV Study Bible* correctly states:

**Away from the body and at home with the Lord** refers to the “intermediate state” between a Christian's death and the resurrection of all believers' bodies on the day Christ returns. Paul means that when he dies, though his physical body will be buried here on earth, he expects that he (as a “spirit” or “soul” without a body) will go immediately into the presence of Christ, and will be present with Christ in that condition until the day of resurrection (cf. Luke 23:43; Phil. 1:23; Heb. 12:23). (BibleWorks)

Philippians 1:19-26

### II. The Relationship of Sanctification to the Intermediate State

Hebrews 10:1-4; 10-14; 11:32-12:2; 12:22-24

Simon Kistemaker was correct when he wrote in his commentary on the Book of Hebrews:

The saints in glory have been perfected, for they are set free from sin. Their souls are perfect; their bodies wait for the day of resurrection. In principle, the believers on earth share in the perfection Christ gives his people. They enjoy the prospect of joining the assembly of the saints in heaven. Only death separates the church below from the church above. When death occurs the believer obtains the fulfillment of Christ's atoning work (Heb. 2:10). (BNTC, e-Sword)

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

**Conclusion:** Wayne Grudem has helpfully summarized the Biblical teaching teaching this way:

Because there is sin that still remains in our hearts even though we have become Christians (Rom. 6:12-13; 1 John 1:8), our sanctification will never be completed in this life ... But once we die and go to be with the Lord, then our sanctification is completed in one sense, for our souls are set free from indwelling sin and are made perfect. The author of Hebrews says that when we come into the presence of God to worship we come “to the spirits of just men made perfect” (Heb. 12:23). This is only appropriate because it is in anticipation of the fact that “nothing unclean shall enter” into the presence of God, the heavenly city (Rev. 21:27).

However, when we appreciate that sanctification involves the whole person, including our bodies (see 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Thess. 5:23), then we realize that sanctification will not be entirely completed until the Lord returns and we receive new resurrection bodies. We await the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ from heaven, and he “will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body” (Phil. 3:21). It is “at his coming” (1 Cor. 15:23) that we will be made alive with a resurrection body and then we shall fully “bear the image of the Man of heaven” (1 Cor. 15:49). (*Systematic Theology*, p. 749)