



ALL SAINTS

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The State of Man After Death: Truth
Explained and Heresy Exposed
Part 2

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Overview

- Our goal for this two-part class is to rightly understand our eschatological hope as Christians.
- We will explore what our hope is and look at the WCF and the scriptures on the subject.
- We will also explore the history and development of certain false doctrines such as purgatory and understand why they are error.

Review

- First a quick review of last week's material.
- It is essential that we have this firmly in mind for what we are going to study this morning.

Adam's Hope--Summary

- Adam was in a probationary state in the garden.
- He had an eschatological hope that likely included a glorified body and future state of bliss worshipping God.
- The details are sparse, but can say this much.

Our Hope

- If you only remember one thing from this series, let it be this: our hope is Christians is not to spend eternity as disembodied spirits in heaven.
- That is a temporary state.
- Our eschatological hope is for our souls to be rejoined with our glorified bodies and to dwell with God forever in the new heaven and the new Earth.
- This looks a lot like Adam's hope.

Our Hope

- So what happens when we die?
- Our body dies, and our immortal soul is severed from it.
- Our souls do not die or sleep.
- This applies to the reprobate (un-believers) as well.

Our Hope

- The souls of believers are glorified.
- This means the process of sanctification is completed.
- Remaining sin is gone, and we are conformed to the image of Christ.
- Our souls then go immediately to heaven to await the resurrection.

The Reprobate

- The souls of the reprobate (non-believers) are cast into hell to await the final judgment.
- These souls are in torment and utter darkness.

Resurrection of the Dead

- We confess the resurrection of the body in the Apostles Creed.
- It is an ancient doctrine, but there are many believers who have not thought it through.
- Our bodies return to dust (i.e. dirt, worm food), but God will raise them up anyway and reunite them with our souls.
- Bodies and souls will be reunited forever.

Glorious Bodies

- There is mystery here.
- We do not know exactly what qualities our resurrected bodies will have.
- Our bodies will be “like” Christ’s glorious body, but are not given the details.
- We do not know exactly how the bodies of the reprobate will be raised to dishonor.

New This Week

- WCF 33—The Last Judgment
- Purgatory
- Prayer for the Dead

Eschaton

- The Greek adjective ἔσχατος (*eschatos*) is the origin of the English words eschaton, eschatology, eschatological.
- Eschatos simply mean “last,” and it is used 52 times in the NT. It does not usually refer to the apocalypse when used in the Biblical text.
- E.g. Hebrews 1:2.
- But it is rather a Greek root of English words.
- I prefer the term *eschaton* to the word *apocalypse* because the latter has trite cultural connotations.

WCF 33:1

“God hath appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world, in righteousness, by Jesus Christ, to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father. In which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but likewise **all persons that have lived upon earth shall appear before the tribunal of Christ**, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds; and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.”

Acts 17:30-31

³⁰ "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹ **because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness** by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

2 Cor. 5:10

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.”

Hebrews 9:27-28

“²⁷ And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, ²⁸ so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.”

WCF 33:2

“The end of God’s appointing this day is for the manifestation of the **glory of his mercy**, in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of his **justice**, in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient. **For then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fullness of joy and refreshing, which shall come from the presence of the Lord:** but the wicked, who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be **cast into eternal torments**, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.”

Revelation 20:11-15

¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.

Revelation 20:11-15

¹³ And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ **And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.**

WCF 33:3

“As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both **to deter all men from sin; and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity:** so will he have that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come; and may be ever prepared to say, **Come Lord Jesus, come quickly, Amen.**”

Matthew 24:36-39

³⁶ “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. ³⁷ For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

End Game

- So what does our hope look like?
- Once we are resurrected and reunited with our glorified bodies and judged righteous by the imputed righteousness of Christ, what then?
- The answer is the new heaven and the new Earth.

Rev. 21:1-4

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.”**

Rev. 22:1-5

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² through the middle of the street of the city; **also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month.** The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Rev. 22:1-5

³ No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

Poythress

“The tree of life is present, renewing the blessing of Eden in Genesis 2:9. Access to God’s life-giving blessings, barred after the Fall, is here renewed . . . The point is that Eden is back, with its fullness of blessing multiplied many times.”
Vern Poythress, The Returning King: A Guide to the Book of Revelation 193.

Summary

- Adam was in a probationary state before the fall. He had an eschatological hope which he failed to attain because he sinned.
- Under the Gospel, when we die our souls go to heaven and our bodies see corruption.
- At the last day our bodies will be resurrected and glorified and reunited with our souls.
- We will face judgment.

Summary

- Believers will be judged righteous based on the imputed righteousness of Christ.
- The reprobate will be cast into utter darkness and suffer eternal torment.
- The elect will dwell forever with God in the new heaven and the new Earth.

Purgatory

- Purgatory is a false doctrine promulgated by the Pope of Rome and his adherents.
- It is supposed to be a third place for departed souls who are baptized and sort of saved but not ready for Heaven.
- Souls have to do penance to be purified from their sins.
- This is heresy and denies the Gospel.

WCF 32:1

“The bodies of men, after death, return to dust, and see corruption: but their souls, which neither die nor sleep, having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them: the souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God, in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies. And the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. **Beside these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none.**”

A.A. Hodge

“Concerning purgatory, the Council of Trent teaches—(a.) That there is a purifying fire through which imperfect Christians must pass. (b.) That souls in purgatory may be benefited by the prayers and masses offered in their behalf on earth. (Counc. Trent, sess. XXV.) This doctrine is false, because—(1.) It is nowhere taught in Scripture.

A.A. Hodge

(2.) It is opposed to the teaching of Scripture as to the intermediate state, as shown above. (3.) It rests upon Anti-Christian principles as to the efficacy of the atonement of Christ, as to the sin-expiating and soul-purifying efficacy of temporary suffering, as to the sacrifice of the mass, and as to the prayers for the dead, etc.”

A.A. Hodge, The Westminster Confession: A Commentary 384-85.

Purgatory

“1030 All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.”

Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church (which is not a church), available at

<https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/ P2 N.HTM>

Purgatory

1031 The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned.⁶⁰⁴ The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent. the tradition of the Church, by reference to certain texts of Scripture, speaks of a cleansing fire:⁶⁰⁵ *Id.*

Purgatory

604 Cf. Council of Florence (1439): DS 1304;
Council of Trent (1563): DS 1820; (1547): 1580;
see also Benedict XII, Benedictus Deus (1336):
DS 1000.

605 Cf. 1 Cor 3:15; 1 Pet 1:7.

Calvin on Purgatory

We are bound, therefore, to raise our voice to its highest pitch, and cry aloud that purgatory is a deadly device of Satan; that it makes void the cross of Christ; that it offers intolerable insult to the divine mercy; that it undermines and overthrows our faith. For what is this purgatory but the satisfaction for sin paid after death by the souls of the dead? Hence when this idea of satisfaction is refuted, purgatory itself is forthwith completely overturned. But if it is perfectly clear, from what was lately said, that the blood of Christ is the only satisfaction, expiation, and cleansing for the sins of believers, what remains but to hold that purgatory is mere blasphemy, horrid blasphemy against Christ?

John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, III, 5, 6.

1 Co. 3:10-15

¹⁰ According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. ¹¹ For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—

1 Cor. 3:10-15

¹³ each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴ If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ **If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.**

Calvin

“What fire (they ask) can that be but the fire of purgatory, by which the defilements of sin are wiped away, in order that we may enter pure into the kingdom of God? But most of the Fathers give it a different meaning—viz. the tribulation or cross by which the Lord tries his people, that they may not rest satisfied with the defilements of the flesh. This is much more probable than the fiction of a purgatory.” Calvin, Institutes, III, 5, 9.

1 Peter 1:6-7

⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ **so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

Council of Trent

Whereas the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Ghost, has, from the sacred writings and the ancient tradition of the Fathers, taught, in sacred councils, and very recently in this oecumenical Synod, that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls there detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but principally by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar; the holy Synod enjoins on bishops that they diligently endeavour that the sound doctrine concerning Purgatory, transmitted by the holy Fathers and sacred councils, be believed, maintained, taught, and every where proclaimed by the faithful of Christ. But let the more difficult and subtle questions, and which tend not to edification, and from which for the most part there is no increase of piety, be excluded from popular discourses before the uneducated multitude.

Council of Trent

“In like manner, such things as are uncertain, or which labour under an appearance of error, let them not allow to be made public and treated of. **While those things which tend to a certain kind of curiosity or superstition, or which savour of filthy lucre, let them prohibit as scandals and stumbling-blocks of the faithful.** But let the bishops take care, that the suffrages of the faithful who are living, to wit the sacrifices of masses, prayers, alms, and other works of piety, **which have been wont to be performed by the faithful for the other faithful departed, be piously and devoutly performed, in accordance with the institutes of the church;** and that whatsoever is due on their behalf, from the endowments of testators, or in other way, be discharged, not in a perfunctory manner, but diligently and accurately, by the priests and ministers of the church, and others who are bound to render this (service).” Decree Concerning Purgatory, Council of Trent, 25th Session, 1563.

Papist View of Tradition

81 "Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit." "and [Holy] Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It transmits it to the successors of the apostles so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may faithfully preserve, expound and spread it abroad by their preaching."

82 As a result the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, "does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. **Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honoured with equal sentiments** of devotion and reverence."

Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church (which is not a church)

Praying for the Dead

1032 **This teaching is also based on the practice of prayer for the dead**, already mentioned in Sacred Scripture: "Therefore Judas Maccabeus] made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin."⁶⁰⁷ From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God.⁶⁰⁸ The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead

WCF 21:4

“Prayer is to be made for things lawful; and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter: **but not for the dead**, nor for those of whom it may be known that they have sinned the sin unto death.”

Luke 16:19-31

¹⁹ “There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. ²⁰ And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, ²¹ who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, ²³ and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. ²⁴ And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’

Luke 16:19-31

²⁵ But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.' ²⁷ And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house—

Luke 16:19-31

²⁸ for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’ ²⁹ But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ ³⁰ And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ ³¹ He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’”

Praying for the Dead

- 607 2 Macc 12:46
- “Therefore Judas Maccabeus made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin.”
- This is reference to Second Maccabees, one of the non-Canonical books included in the Romans Catholic Bible a/k/a The Apocrypha
- It was originally in Greek, not Hebrew.
- It is not the word of God.

WCF 1:3

“The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of the Scripture, and therefore are of no authority in the church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings.”

Rev. 22:18-19

18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

Romans 3:2

1 Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? 2 **Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God.**

2 Peter 1:19-21

¹⁹ And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, ²⁰ knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹ **For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**

Van Dixhorn

“These books are sometime called secondary or deuterocanonical books, later additions often imprecisely defined by the churches who use them, including the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches. They were not part of the writings of Moses, the Prophets and psalms, as Luke summarizes the Old Testament canon (e.g. Luke 24:27, 44); they are not part of the ‘oracles of God’, a phrase Paul uses to describe the Old Testament in his letter to the Romans. Indeed even today they are set apart in a special section in many printed Bibles.

Van Dixhorn

Additionally, some of these books hid their true date and authorship under false names or false titles—so many in fact that the entire corpus of additional books is often called the ‘Apocrypha’ (or hidden things). These books do not carry divine authority, and are thus not part of the list, or catalogue or canon of Scripture.” Chad Van Dixhorn, Confessing the Faith: A Reader’s Guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith 11.

Luke 24: 27, 44

²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

⁴⁴ Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

A.A. Hodge

“The word Apocrypha (anything hidden) has been applied to certain ancient writings whose authorship is not manifest, and for which unfounded claims have been set up for a place in the canon. Some of these have been associated with the Old and some with the New Testament. In this section of the Confession, however, the name is applied principally to those spurious scriptures for which a certain place is claimed in the Old Testament canon by the Roman Church.”

A.A. Hodge

These are *Tobit, Wisdom, Judith, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch*, and the two books of *Maccabees*. They also prefix to the book of Daniel the *History of Susannah*; and insert in the third chapter the *Song of the Children*; and add to the end of the book the *History of Bel and the Dragon*.”

A.A. Hodge

“That these books have no right to a place in the canon is proved by the following facts:

(1) They never formed a part of the Hebrew Scriptures. They have always been rejected by the Jews, to whose guardianship the Old Testament Scriptures were committed.

(2) None of them were ever quoted by Christ or the apostles.

A.A. Hodge

3) They were never embraced in the list of the canonical books by the early Fathers; and even in the Roman Church their authority was not accepted by the most learned and candid men until after it was made an article of faith by the Council of Trent, late in the sixteenth century.

4) The internal evidence presented by their contents disproves their claims. None of them make any claim to inspiration, while the best of them disclaim it. Some of them consist of childish fables, and inculcate bad morals.”
A.A. Hodge, The Westminster Confession: A Commentary
33.

The Citation to 2 Maccabees.

⁴³ And making a gathering, he sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection,

⁴⁴ (For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead,)

⁴⁵ And because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up for them.

⁴⁶ **It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins.**

2 Maccabees 12:43-46 (Douay-Rheims Translation)

Praying for the Dead

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Praying for the Dead

- 608 Cf. Council of Lyons II (1274): DS 856.
- This is a reference made to a church council, the Second Council of Lyon, which occurred in 1274.
- There is no scriptural support whatsoever for praying for the dead.
- Once you are dead, it is over.
- We properly pray for the friends and family of those who have died.

