

## Do You Recognize This Man? (Part 7)

Jesus on Last Things

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What does the world believe about the afterlife? What do this world's Christianity believe about what happens after death? How would they respond if we took them off the street and asked them, "What will things be like after you die?" "What will we be?" "Where will we be, or go to?" "What will we be doing?" "What will happen throughout eternity?"

The Worldwide Church of God used to produce a booklet with the title, *What Will You be Doing in the Next Life?* How do you suppose people would answer that question?

Folks out in the world have all sorts of differing ideas about what they will be doing in the next life, if they believe in a next life at all. There are many people who believe that this is the only life that there is, and that they would better make the most of it. As Paul says, those are the types of people who exclaim, "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die!"

So, how does this world's Christian with some knowledge of the Bible answer these questions?

To get these answers I went on the internet, and I found a website, [www.patheos.com](http://www.patheos.com). This site seems to be a type of comparative religion site, dedicated to giving, "balanced views of religion and spirituality." I supposed that "balanced" is in the eye and ear of the beholder.

They say this about the Protestant view of the afterlife:

"Traditionally, Protestants believe salvation is a gift of God granted by faith. On the Day of Judgment all people will be resurrected; those who have believed and have trusted in Christ to a life of blessedness in the presence of God; while those who have rejected God's gifts to a place of torment and separation from God."

"Heaven is a state of blessedness where you exist in the presence of God, something that humans have not been able to do since the Garden of Eden."

"Hell is the place of torment as just punishment for sin."

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"Because Purgatory is not explicitly mentioned in the Bible, all Protestants reject the Roman Catholic Church's teaching that there is also a transitional place for the process of purification of the soul."

"With that said, there is some diversity of thought about what happens immediately after death. Some believe that the soul goes to be with Christ in heaven, while awaiting the Day of Judgment and a resurrected body. Others suggest that there is an intermediate time of soul-sleep—an unconscious waiting for the resurrection. Some believe that the souls of the dead proceed immediately upon death either to heaven, or hell." [To me, this appears to be most Protestants.]

"Traditionally, Protestants believe in a judgment day at the end of history. On this day, all the dead from throughout human history will be resurrected, and will possess some sort of physical body that will resemble, but yet be different from the body possessed during their earthly existence. At the final resurrection of the dead the saints, or the elect, will enter heaven while the damned are sent to hell."

"In recent surveys, far more Americans say that they believe in heaven than that they believe in hell, and this view has been adopted by some within Protestantism."

"Many Protestants hold that neither heaven, nor hell is a literal place. Heaven is a metaphor for blessedness or a divine relationship in this life, while hell is a metaphor for living in the absence of God in this life."

To me, all this is not enlightening at all. Is this enlightening to you? Basically all this tells me is that some folks believe this idea while others believe this other idea—boatloads of ideas of what they think might happen after death. It is a lot of heaven, and hell, a lot of assuming and supposing, and very light on details. Of course, this is because Protestants have not had revealed to them the truth of what happens after one dies, and what will occur in the last days either.

I find this to be generally the case—this sort of ambiguousness—among most Protestant writings on this subject. It is very vague. There is a lot of spiritualizing away various things. And, there is a fair amount of disagreement or ambivalence (might be this, or might be that—sort of thing).

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They almost always have an absence of any idea of what life will be like afterwards—what we will be doing during all that time, or where we will be. They just generally say something like heaven, but they do not give you any more specifics than that. They do not say that we will be helping God to do anything in the universe. The general idea is that we will all just be staring at God and Christ for all eternity—the beatific vision, which has come down to us from the Roman Catholic Church. It just seems to me that there is really no understanding about how things will be.

And I have to admit, that we cannot be fully dogmatic on some things, but we have at least (blending this sermon from some of my others) taken the clues that are given in the Bible to help us understand how things may be. We certainly give a clearer picture of *The Wonderful World Tomorrow, What it will be Like* than what Protestant normally say. They just say the generic "You will go to heaven, or hell" thing. And that is all they have.

So, as I have said before, we are going to continue this series, *Do You Recognize this Man? Part 7*, and as I have done in this series, we will compare with what folks think Jesus taught versus what He actually said, what is recorded for us in the scriptures.

As Jesus said, it seems far more likely that people will believe their traditions about subjects and things like this, than what is actually taught in the Bible by God's revelation to us in the scripture. They are much more likely to believe their bedtime stories, and their Sunday school lessons in which all sorts of things are taught, their traditions in their various denominations, rather than what is explicitly said in scripture. And this, of course, holds true with the nature of last things.

Well, since this sermon was intended to be given on the Last Great Day, the last holy day of the year, we will pursue that too within the scope of the subject because it has much to do with Jesus' teaching on last things. So, we will pursue this topic in the gospels.

But before we get to the gospels, I do want to have a bit of Last Great Day information as we begin. And as we found out on the Last Great Day, very little is said about this particular day in scripture. It is mentioned only four or five places in the entire Old Testament.

Lets go to the most well known one found in Leviticus 23.

**Leviticus 23:33-36** Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be

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the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LOORD. On the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it. For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LOORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LOORD. It is a sacred assembly, and you shall do no customary work on it.

**Leviticus 23:39** Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the LOORD for seven days; on the first day there shall be a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest.

In these initial instructions on the Feast of Tabernacles, and the Last Great Day, it is simply called, "The Eighth Day," and it is a sacred assembly, and to be treated like the rest of the holy days in which there is no customary work to be done on them.

Notice that it is not called the last day, or in any other way described or distinguished. Now, because it is in context with the Feast of Tabernacles, presumably the Israelites, just as we do, considered it a book-end holy day at the end of the Harvest Festival. As my dad showed there was this female rabbi who stated, "This is a holy day looking for a cause." They really do not know what it is all about. It just seems to be tacked onto the end of the Feast of Tabernacles. There are really no instructions given in the Old Testament Bible about it. It just seems like it only concludes the Feast of Tabernacles. In Numbers 29:35-38, the offerings that are to be given on this day, are no different from any of the other offerings that were given on any of the other holy days, such as Feast of Trumpets. There was nothing even in the offerings to give us a clue about how things are different about this day. The last three passages in scripture, I Kings 8:66, II Chronicles 7:9, and Nehemiah 8:18 really shed no additional light on the subject. Basically they say that they kept the eighth day. Both I King 8, and II Chronicles 7 were concerning the dedication of the temple, and the Nehemiah 8 passage is regarding the exiles return, and it was re-discovered when they read the law that they should be keeping these days.

So, there is nothing more from those scriptures or the remainder of the Old Testament about this day.

However, let us read some more. Turn to Leviticus 23 again. This is where we begin to see some difference. Remember, in verse 39 we saw where we should keep the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days, and then the eighth day should also be kept as a

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Sabbath.

**Leviticus 23:40-43** And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LOORD your God for seven days. You shall keep it as a feast to the LOORD for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LOORD your God."

As you might have guessed, there is something about booths, and the dwelling therein for seven days, as well as the fact that they dwelled in them for only seven days, that there is a hint of difference. They dwelled in booths for the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles, but on the eighth day, they were not commanded to do so. They did not have to by commandment.

Turn to John 7 where we see that this is mirrored in the activities in Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles in Jesus' time. Now, maybe I should go back to verse 37 just to pick it up, just so we can see this again.

**John 7:37** On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.

As my dad showed in his sermons, this is not the last great day as we know of it today, but it is the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, the seventh day—the last day, the great day of the feast. It is almost as if the whole feast has been building up to this particular day. And He talked about the water ceremony that was done. And on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, the seventh day, the water ceremony was heightened by the fact that the priest went around the altar seven times. And of course, all the people were joining in the activity with singing and the blowing of trumpets; it was a big thing this last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. And so, the context, then, as we read here in John 7, continues down to verse 53, and it says there that at the end of that day's activities and celebrations, everyone went **to his own house**. These celebrants had been keeping the Feast of Tabernacles, and had been dwelling in booths for seven days. But, at the end of this particular day, the people maybe took their booths down, or maybe they left them up—I do not know, but they went to their own houses to sleep in.

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They went inside. They did not dwell in their booth anymore after the end of the seventh day. They went home.

So, what is being said here is, the people left their booths and they went to their own houses. And as we showed earlier, then when Jesus came back the next morning, (John 8:2) the context of that day (the eighth day, what we have been calling the Last Great Day, which we can still do,) runs all the way through John 10:21. So, all the teaching in John chapters 8, 9, and part of 10 have to do with Jesus' revelations regarding what the Last Great Day means. I will not be going much into that today. That is going to be left for other years. There is much instruction there.

And as you begin to go through the context, and the subjects of John 8, 9, and 10, you will see a lot of things come to the surface that we had never linked to the Last Great Day before, and they fit so beautifully! There is a lot about judgment, because the Last Great Day has much to do with judgment, particularly the judgment of the world, and the judgment by Christ—how He judges things. For instance in chapter 8 He shows how He judged the woman caught in adultery. And then there was the man born blind. And there is, of course, how He judged His own nation. He judged them to be children of Satan. And then He reveals Himself as the I AM, basically to get the message across to them, "I am the One you must look to." Yet they picked up stones to stone Him with. He said, "Abraham looked to Me! Why do you not?"

And then, of course, in chapter 10 there is the whole "Good Shepherd" teachings and parables—He is telling the world, "I am the Good Shepherd that the whole world must come to. I am the Door of Salvation. I have another flock, besides this one I am building now, to bring in." There are a lot of interesting things that go with the Last Great Day.

In particular, I want to bring this idea out that they left their booths, and went home on the last day.

We are to live by every word of God—Matthew 4:4, and Luke 4:4. This change of venue from booth to going back to their own houses signals a major change in meaning. And it was a change that God did not make obvious. He made it so that we would have to really think about it. How long has it taken us to come to this understanding that the Last Great Day differs in this manner from the Feast of Tabernacles?

So while this day is associated with Feast of Tabernacles, it is obviously so since it is attached to the end of it, and even is called the eighth day, it has its own particular and specific meaning. And it has to do with leaving booths—temporary dwellings—leaving the booths behind you.

What did the booths represent? We saw it back there in Leviticus 23:43, where He said that He caused Israel to dwell in booths during the Feast of Tabernacles so they would remember that He made their fathers dwell in booths when they came out of Egypt. That is all you need to know. Suddenly things begin falling into place when you understand that the holy days are the plan of God in chronological order, starting with the Passover, Days of Unleavened Bread, the Day of Pentecost, the Day of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and then the Feast of Tabernacles where they dwelled in booths; and now you have the Last Great Day at the very end.

Now what is it about booths that it is different from dwelling in a house? A booth is something portable, on the one hand, while your house is not. Another thing is that a booth is something made of non-durable materials, unlike a house. Your house is usually wood, stone, or bricks, or maybe combinations thereof.

Think of *The Three Little Pigs*. The first little pig had a house made from straw. He had a booth [if you will]. The second was similar to it, and the wolf blew them both in. But the third house of bricks was so strong, it could not be moved or blown down. It was a permanent structure that was fixed on the ground. It was strong, and durable. No huffing and puffing could blow it down.

The booths were something constructed crudely and quickly with branches put together. And then it could be easily be un-made. The idea of the booth was that you dwell in it, and it provided a little shelter, but you are on the move, and so you had to be able to take it down, and pack it up, and leave, because as we understood, the Israelites were on the move from Egypt to the Promised Land, and it took them 40 years of dwelling in booths before they finally got to the land, and could dwell in more permanent homes.

So, we have in the booths an idea of temporary-ness, of unsettledness, and of transition from one place to another—in transition between the two more permanent positions. We understand that pretty well. And we understand that the Millennium is a transition period too.

Jesus Christ comes back to this earth, and He has a lot of work to do, because there are millions of people in this world—billions, now—who knows how many billions there will be after the Great White Throne Judgment—but after the Great Tribulation, and the Day of the Lord, it will probably back down only into the millions, if we are to believe what the book of Revelation says about the population of the earth being cut down drastically. But, there will be millions of people who will not believe Him, just as there were millions of Israelites who really did not believe God either. And though they saw Christ in the Cloud, and they saw Him in the Pillar of Fire, they really did not believe

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Him. And it took 40 years of wandering in the wilderness before God was able to bring a people into the Promised Land.

In the Millennium, He gives Himself a thousand years in which to change the minds and hearts of the people of this earth to ones that will believe Him. And even so, Satan comes back at the end, and he immediately deceives who knows how many people. And they come up against Jerusalem. It sounds a lot like what happened in the wilderness with all those unbelieving people. I hope I am not destroying your idea of the Millennium, but we have to remember that human nature is very difficult to overcome. And I think that there will be more turmoil in the Millennium than we think, especially at the beginning! Jesus Christ is going to have to use His power—coming with a rod of iron. And, how long will He have to use that rod? The Israelites were very stiff-necked. How many of them did He kill in the wilderness? All of them, but two, because they would not bend their necks to Him.

So, how different is the rest of the world from Israel? Not very. Maybe, they will be better. Maybe they will not be so stubborn. But, they have that same human nature. And so, we have in the Millennium, as the Feast of Tabernacles depicts, a look back to the way it was in the wilderness, and look forward to what it will be like in the future Millennium.

And so, we have the transition period, following that, they leave their booths as it is in the Feast of Tabernacles, and they then come to the last holy day, after the Millennium!

So what does this mean?

Leaving the booths, and going to their home suggests becoming permanent. It is the opposite of what the booths represent. The Last Great Day represents a time of changelessness, permanence, and endurance. An overall term would be that the Last Great Day represents eternity!

Now, this fits in very well with our understanding of the eighth day in terms of prophecy. It looks forward to the final judgment of humanity when the destinies of all men will be set in stone forever. Everyone's doom will be read at that time. As Jesus says in John 5:29, "All—**ALL**—who have done good will be resurrected to eternal life, and all those who have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation." This does not leave anyone out, does it not? By the time you get to this point in the history of the world, everyone will have been judged either to be given eternal life in God's kingdom, or to be sent into the lake of fire. And we know that this equates to the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20, starting in verse 11). And this follows through, not just in that

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judgment period, but there are more "last things" that come, which starts in Revelation 21 when the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven, and there is a new heaven, and a new earth, and chapter 22 talks about the Tree of Life, and all of those things in the new world on earth as the fountain head of God's government for all eternity.

So, the teaching on the Last Great Day needs to center on last things, enduring things, permanent things, eternal things, because that is what this day is all about. Mankind has ceased being transitory. He has ceased being temporary. He has ceased being unsettled, both mentally and physically. And by this time, all humanity has been changed to something much more permanent. Their character is permanently fixed for good, but if they are not agreed to it, then they are permanently dead.

So, what did Jesus teach about the afterlife, and eternal life? The answers fit in with this understanding on the Last Great Day.

Let us turn back to John 5. I am coming here because this is an overview that Jesus gave regarding the judgments and the resurrections. We can use this as a framework to hang everything else on.

**John 5:24** "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

To slip this into our understanding of the Last Great Day, He is saying that if we hear Christ's words, and believe in the Father, among other things, these are very general categories, we have already started that process of permanence! We have started that process of eternal life and eternity—being enduring.

**John 5:25-29** Most assuredly, 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 to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves 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 condemnation.

There is the framework. We can see all three of the resurrections in this one passage.

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First is the general list of qualification of those who will be given eternal life. They must hear His word, and believe in the Father. These are very general points.

And, when expanded out they contain many more detailed criteria than just that. I mean, all these things like keeping the Ten Commandments, loving God and man, enduring to the end, growing and producing fruit—they can all be hung under this general category. So He says that if you remain faithful, and you do these things, you will not come under judgment, and will be granted eternal life.

And I will mention also that not only will we be granted eternal life, but we will be given a permanent place in God's kingdom. As it says in John 14, there is a place being prepared for us. And we are being prepared for it.

Now, verses 25 through 27 can be taken two ways. But, in both of them they end up at the same place. It just depends on where you start. The first is that this is an intimation of the first resurrection. 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. This has to do with Christ's return when the faithful dead are given eternal life. That is easily seen there. The other way is just taking it from a bit further back than that point, and saying that this is an announcement of the preaching of the gospel in which the spiritually dead will hear Christ's voice—converted—and then they proceed along the path to the Kingdom of God, and eternal life. They both reach the same place, but it is just how far back do you want to go?

Do you go to the actual first resurrection, or do you go back to the preaching of the gospel, and God gathering all those people through the preaching of the gospel, and their faithful belief for the first resurrection? It all ends up the same way. It is only a choice of how far back do you want to take it. So, either way, the result is the same—those who accept Christ in this life, and remain faithful will be resurrected to glory. So, there you see the first resurrection.

Verses 28 and 29 speak of a resurrection in which all the dead are raised back to life. And there will be a judgment that will separate the good from the wicked—the wheat from the chaff. This, of course, speaks of the second resurrection, also known as the general resurrection of the dead, when most all of humanity will come up together.

And then, of course, the third resurrection is what is here called, the resurrection of condemnation. It is also called the second death in the book of Revelation, which also calls it being cast into the lake of fire. They are all names or descriptions of the same event.

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At the very least, we see three categories here. First, the calling of the dead to eternal life now; the future resurrection to life; and the condemnation of evil-doers. Those are the three categories—those called now and given eternal life; those who come up in the general resurrection, and offered the truth; then those who accept, and those who do not and are condemned. This is all fleshed out in Revelation 20, and we will see all three resurrections here too. The first is found in verse 4:

**Revelation 20:4** And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Now, the next sentence is a parenthetical phrase or statement, so that we understand that this is the first resurrection, in which He then says,

**Revelation 20:5** (But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.)

So we know, then, that the first resurrection occurs a thousand years before the second general resurrection. This one, in verse 4, is the first resurrection, as so mentioned at the end of verse 5.

**Revelation 20:5** This is the first resurrection.

**Revelation 20:6** Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

So we of the first resurrection will be priests and kings with Christ.

So now, the Millennium occurs, and then comes verse 11:

**Revelation 20:11-12** Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before

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God, and books were opened.

The One who is judging them, who sits on that Great White Throne is Jesus Christ. We saw that back in John 5, where judgment had been committed to Him already, because He was also the Son of Man; He has gone through this life as a man, and He is also God, and so He is able to judge us so very fairly.

**Revelation 20:12-13** And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them.

So, the dead, wherever they happened to have died, however it happened to them, are all raised at this time, now, except those who were in the first resurrection. "I saw the dead, small and great—the dead." And then in verse 14, this is what we have called the third resurrection, also known as the second death, by being cast into the lake of fire. Jesus called this the resurrection of condemnation.

**Revelation 20:14-15** Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

So, what we see here in Revelation 20 is the same, though cast in different words or different format, as what Jesus gave us in John 5. All three were there as I showed you just a bit earlier. We saw those being called now to eternal life. And then the "all" being resurrected, which eventually becomes split into two categories, those resurrected to life, having done good, and those resurrected to condemnation, having continued to do evil.

They are the same. They match each other just like Revelation 6 matches Matthew 24. So does Revelation 20 match John 5. They both lay out things just as Jesus gave them. It is a really neat thing to see and understand, that they follow each other so closely.

So now, we understand, that we have that framework, and it is the same that Jesus taught in His own ministry. It is not something that we just got out of the book of Revelation by some tricky way of working things out in prophecy. No. John had that revealed to Him, but it was based on what Jesus had said already in his the ministry.

Let us begin looking at some particular things that Jesus said about "last things." Please turn to Mark 13. This chapter contains his version of the Olivet Prophecy. I could have gone to Matthew 24, Mark 13, or Luke 21, but that would have been a sermon on last things. But, I am trying to go to other places in the main to see some of the things that He taught that have not been touched on as much by our organization.

**Mark 13:26-27** Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.

Obviously, this is the second coming of Christ—The Son of Man coming in the clouds. And it is then that He sends His angels out to gather the Elect. So, Christ gathers the Elect at His return—His second coming. As Paul later explains in I Thessalonians 4 that this includes not just the living saints alive at the time He returns, but also the dead saints of history. So, those who have died already, asleep in Jesus, they will be resurrected first, and those who are alive, and remain, will meet Him in the clouds. We will all go up at once as one great family, one great congregation, all of the firstfruits of God at one time, when Jesus Christ returns to this earth.

Now, these verses here in Mark 13, by themselves, negate any idea of going to heaven after death. When you put this together with I Thessalonians 4, there is no way that you could say that the saints go to heaven.

Now, think about this. Why would the angels have to gather the elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of the earth, here and there, all over the earth, if they were already gathered in heaven? It just does not make any sense.

If they were already in heaven having spent 1000, 2000, 3000, even 4000 or more years enjoying the bliss of God, why would they have to be gathered? The reason is that the saints have not only died all over the earth, but they are living all over the earth, those who are still alive. And so, He sends out His angels to bring them all together to meet Christ in the air. The angels are ministering spirits sent out from God for those who have accepted salvation. So, these angels are coming to help us rise to meet Christ in the air. That is why He sends out His angels.

We can see here that the elect are not in heaven at the second coming of Christ, they are on the earth, and have been since the creation—the dead, and the living.

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Now did you notice that when we were in John 5 that Jesus specifically said that the dead rise from their graves? The dead do not descend from heaven, but they rise from their graves. They were in the earth, or sea—here under the atmosphere on the earth. They were not up in heaven floating about as it were.

It is very clear. It does not take very much thinking. You just put "two and two" together again.

Turn to Luke 20. What is said here might appear to contradict our understanding of the immortality of the soul, and the after-life. But, when you understand what Jesus has taught in the words of your Bible, we know that in reality, Jesus' words here only confirms what we believe. Let us start in verse 27.

**Luke 20:27** Then some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection, came to Him and asked Him,...

Notice that as this passage begins, the subject is clear—it is named—this is talking about the resurrection.

**Luke 20:27-28** Then some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, saying: "Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife, and he dies without children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.

Now this was the "Levirate Law," that is given back in the Old Testament, and it is quoted correctly here, that if a man dies without offspring, in order to keep the inheritance laws correctly, the wife of the deceased would be given to the closest surviving kinsmen to produce a son who would be heir of the first man. And then, the land would remain within the genealogy correctly.

**Luke 20:29-33** Now there were seven brothers. And the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her as wife, and he died childless. Then the third took her, and in like manner the seven also; and they left no children, and died. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife."

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Jesus is just amazing here! He gets right to it.

**Luke 20:34-38** And Jesus answered and said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. But even Moses showed in the burning bush passage that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him."

Did you notice that He did not specifically answer their question? He went around it and corrected their understanding. Their question was stupid because in the resurrection there is no marriage. So this whole thing becomes a mute point.

Notice what Jesus said here. First He tells us that in the resurrection the saints—those worthy to attain that age—they are equal to the angels in the fact that they are made now of spirit, and they are no longer subject to physical needs or whims.

Actually He first said that they will not marry, just as the angels do not marry. And then secondly, also like angels, the saints no longer die, because they are equal to the angels in that they are now made of spirit. So just like angels they do not marry. Just like angels they are made of spirit. And so, they are no longer subject to death.

Now He adds in verse 36 a very important point. And that is that He says that they are considered Sons of God by a resurrection. This is a very important point. They are considered sons of the resurrection.

Why is this important?

Angels are not sons of God by resurrection. They are sons of God by creation. What this means, then, is that the saints, the elect, even though they have spirit bodies, and they do not marry, they are in an entirely different category, because they become spirit beings through the resurrection from the dead.

Now, who else became a Son of God by a resurrection? Jesus Christ. Let us look at that in Romans 1 where Paul will explain it. It begins in verse 1, and it is interesting that Paul explains this immediately upon opening the book.

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**Romans 1:1-6** Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ.

What Paul is getting to without actually saying it is that we are following the same process that Jesus began, and finished. Notice very clearly in verse 4 that Jesus Christ was declared the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead.

And so Jesus' teaching in Luke 20 shows that the son-ship of the saints is of a higher nature than the nature of the son-ship of angels, because the son-ship of the saints follows the example of and the way of son-ship of Christ.

What does that mean?

First, it means that because of the resurrection from the dead the saints will be greater than the angels, and secondly it means that they are of the same kind that Christ is.

So wrapped up here in very concise terms Jesus is saying that in the resurrection from the dead, the elect of God is going to be just like Him—glorified like Him. And we know this because in Hebrews 2:7-9 Paul is quoting Psalm 8, "being for a little while lower than the angels," he tells us that it is only for a little while. In the resurrection, we will be like Christ. We see Him. And, that is how we are going to be! We see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels, but He became glorified through the resurrection from the dead. And so will we.

So, Jesus taught that right here in this answer.

However, there is another point in here. And it is may be the truly sticky theological point of the passage. And that is found in verse 38, where Jesus says that He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

Protestants and Catholics alike latch onto this to say that this means that the people who become Christians do not really ever die, because He is the God of the living. They

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have immortal souls, remember? Their bodies die, they say, but their spirit goes on and continues to live. Why do they get that out of this passage?

Protestants claim that this means that since God says He is the God of the living, and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had been dead for hundreds of years when God had said this to Moses on Mount Sinai, then the patriarchs are not really dead, but have immortal souls, and are living with God in heaven. You see, when Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob died, the children of Israel went into Egypt. Later they became captives and slaves of the Egyptians, and a couple hundred years pass, and finally God calls Moses at the burning bush, and tells him who He is, and that He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, using the verb "is," not was. And so, they took from this, and Jesus also took from this, that He is the God of the living! But the Protestants and Jesus look at these two things quite differently!

Jesus looks at things as God in heaven. The Protestants look at things as mortal human beings. That is the vast difference here. Remember the subject is resurrection, not the immortality of the soul. You see, the Protestants put the immortality of the soul into this passage when it is not there. Jesus is talking about the resurrection.

What is the phrase that comes to mind when you start talking or thinking about the resurrection—from a human standpoint? It is the resurrection from the dead—the hope of the resurrection. Also we should add into this that there are a couple of different places in scripture—Jesus says it once to the Greeks, and Paul says it once in I Corinthians 15. He says that in order to be resurrected, you have had to die first. It says you put a grain of wheat into the ground, it must die before it can grow and produce fruit. That is how the resurrection works. There has to be a death first, and then a resurrection. And so, we have a hope knowing that it is appointed for all men once to die, that once we are in the ground and dead, we are going to be resurrected at some point, at Christ's second coming, and be raised in the first resurrection. That is the hope of the resurrection. We have hope because Christ went through this process and was raised by the Father to immortality and glory. And if we go through this same process, we understand that we will hear the voice of Jesus Christ, and be raised to glory and immortality just as He was. That is our hope—our wonderful hope!

So, in saying that God is the God of the living, Jesus is saying that physical death is not the final word for the patriarchs. Though the patriarchs lie dead in their graves, they will live again by means of the resurrection of the dead.

Maybe we should also throw in here, Romans 4:17 where Paul says,

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**Romans 4:17** (As it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations") in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did.

This is exactly what Jesus Christ did when He answered these Sadducees. He was calling Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob alive—as though they were already resurrected. He knew they were dead. But He was speaking about the hope of the resurrection.

Turn to John 12 where He was speaking to those Greeks, and let us just see what it says there.

**John 12:23-25** But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

That is basically what He is saying here—they were interred in the earth (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) waiting for the resurrection. But He considered them already alive again, because they had made it!

Going on to the next thing, this is something that you might not have considered to be about "last things," but let us go to the Sermon on the Mount in the Beatitudes in Matthew 5. We will skip through places here. But, notice all the "last things" mentioned by Him.

**Matthew 5:3** Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

That is our reward! This is our goal.

**Matthew 5:5** Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

They do not inherit heaven, but the earth.

**Matthew 5:8** Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

This could be both here in understanding, and later in all its fullness. But, does this not remind you of I John 3:2 where John says that we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is? These Christians were blessed, the ones who listened to Christ, and did what He said, they are going to see God!

**Matthew 5:9-10** Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Again! He says, "Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven!" So now, the Christian will possess the Kingdom of Heaven. Realize that "of" is a preposition of possession. It is heaven's kingdom. It is not necessarily a preposition of location, or place. What this means is that the kingdom belongs to heaven, not that it is confined to or in heaven.

And of course, we see immediately in verse 5 that the inheritance of the meek—the Christian—is the earth, not heaven.

So even here in the beatitudes, He is teaching about last things, right away, telling us what our reward is, where it will be, the things we will be able to see, and that we are sons of God, that is in the family of God; we are in the most intimate terms with God.

Turn to Matthew 13. This next passage is right at the end of the parable of the tares, and He had just been talking about those who have been cast into the furnace of fire, and

**Matthew 13:43** "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

There are two very important things here. First of all, they will be in the Kingdom of God, with the Father, and secondly they will shine as the sun! He is talking about the glorification of the saints. And who else shines like the sun? God and the Son do.

He is called in Malachi 4:2, "The Son of Righteousness." And notice also in Revelation 1:16 what it says about Christ in His glorified state.

**Revelation 1:16** He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in

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its strength.

He is saying here in this parable—and there is a lot of things that we could have through in the parables—I just picked this one out—that the saints are going to be glorified just like God. He did not hold back about what He taught about the future state of His saints. The Jews who were listening to Him should have remembered Malachi 4:2. I do not know why they did not pick up stones to throw at Him then.

Turn Matthew 16.

**Matthew 16:27** For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

This sounds similar to Mark 13:26, but notice here the timing of things. This is at Christ's coming. "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father, and then He will reward each according to his works." He is talking about the saints here. And so the judgment of the saints ends at His second coming. That is when He will reward them according to their works.

So, what does this tell us? If the rewarding of the saints occurs at His coming, then it cannot be that the saints have already received their reward in heaven. They must, then, certainly still be dead, waiting for their resurrection. They will not be rewarded until the second coming. That is when this judgment will be ending for them. Right now, they are in the grave, waiting.

Also, this verse helps to separate them from the general judgment at the end of the others. What we see here is connected to John 5 in that first group, "who will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear Him will live." This is the one that takes place at the first resurrection.

So, it is separate, then, from the general judgment that comes after.

Turn to Luke 13 please. Here He is talking about the worker of iniquity.

**Luke 13:28-29** There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God.

What I want to point out here in this passage is that this confirms that the patriarchs and the prophets will be present in the Kingdom of God, as well as not only Israelites, but people from all over the earth. There is an intimation here, that it includes gentiles as well being in that first resurrection, coming from all over the world. That is why He has to gather them. We are seeing ties into all these little bits that He has placed throughout the gospels—they are going to be from the north, south, east, and west. And the angels will have to gather them.

Turn to Matthew 19. This passage is about the rich man not being able to enter the kingdom.

**Matthew 19:28-29** So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration [the first resurrection], when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal [everlasting] life.

So, the apostles will sit on thrones of rulership, and judge the 12 tribes of Israel. And this sounds like what we understand of the Millennium. Physical Israel still exists, and that there is not just one resurrection of everybody at the end, and we either go one way or the other, like the Protestants say. No, this means that there is a time in which the saints are raised, while there are still physical people walking on this earth for them to be ruling over. And, as we saw in Matthew 5, their inheritance and reward is also on the earth where these physical people reside, to be ruled over, as we saw there in Revelation 20:4, kings and priests over a physical people.

And then He goes on in verse 29 that it is not just the apostles, but it is every Christian who will receive a reward and eternal life. And as we saw in Revelation 20, we all sit on thrones, not just the apostles.

So, what we see is part of the Millennium, here. He gave us these teachings in His own ministry.

Turn to John 14.

**John 14:2-3** In My Father's house are many mansions [offices, dwellings]; if

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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 to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

This is more information about what things will be like in the Kingdom of God. Within God's family, and within His government, there are many rooms—abodes—offices—to fill, and He has gone to prepare them for us, and us for them, so that we will all be in His kingdom and able to do the jobs that need to be done. This implies that the saints will be busy. You do not get an office to just stick your feet up, and strum some harp all day. You get an office in order to be productive. You are given an office to lead something, or to make something happen, or to manage something, or to create something.

So, not only will we be administering the Kingdom of God as kings, but also as priests officiating in those mediatorial duties between God and men, but we will also have other jobs to fulfill in the kingdom in creating, overseeing, and other projects—the ordinary things that folks do when they attain an office. In great houses, there are lots of things going on; lots of activities. We will be not Gods of leisure and ease, but Gods of work and creativity.

And all of this takes place, as it says there in verse 3, after He comes back again to receive us to Himself.

So, I hope that I have shone that Jesus taught about a future kingdom inhabited and ruled by glorified Christians who receive eternal life and great reward through the resurrection from the dead at Christ's second coming.

To conclude, turn to John 10. This passage takes place a couple of months later, after the Feast of Tabernacles, and Last Great Day portion that ended in verse 21. This takes place at the Feast of Dedication, a time of Hanukah in our month of December. And this is what He says:

**John 10:27-29** My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.

As we saw, the Last Great Day symbolizes and represents the permanence of eternity.

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And this is the sort of thing that Jesus Christ is talking about here—the permanent place that we will have in God's kingdom. We will be permanent, and settled for all eternity as glorified members of the family of God.