

Last week we started our series on heaven. This is a little different approach for us as we usually go through one book of the Bible at a time. The reason we are going this route is due to the numerous questions and misconceptions about heaven (a place I hope we will all experience soon by rapture—we'll come back to that next time).

- And my hope is that by the time we have completed this study it will have **1)** improved your comprehension of the subject of heaven as addressed in the Bible (not fiction or folklore), **2)** given you some foundational evidence for why we take a more literal view of Bible interpretation (instead of allegorical), **3)** and helped you to determine which period in God's eternal plan is being spoken of in various passages in your Bible.
- To do so, we have created this very simple chart to show which period we are talking about in our studies. We are still in the first period, which is **Before Jesus Came** into the world, because, again, this study is focused on heaven.

Before Jesus Came	After Jesus' Coming	The Rapture	The Tribulation and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb	Jesus' 2 nd Coming	The Millennial Kingdom	The Eternal State
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- As with each of the sections, we will cover these **three key areas**: **1)** the **location** where those who died went during that time, **2)** the state of the **soul** for those who died before Jesus came, and **3)** the state of the **body** (although in the transitions there will not always be a change in all three of these areas). **And last time we were in the middle of discussing the state of the soul for those who died before Jesus came.** So we are going to pick back up there.

I. THE BASICS OF HEAVEN AND ETERNAL LIFE

1. BEFORE JESUS CAME (continued)

For quick review, last week as we were discussing the **soul**, we covered that the Bible makes it clear for those who died before Jesus came, **they did not somehow lose all their memory**. As a matter of fact, we read [Isa. 65:16-17](#), which tells us that when those who died before Jesus came into the world and then went to **Paradise** in the center of the earth (you will have to go back and listen to last week's message if you want more info), only **the former troubles are forgotten**, while their knowledge of God, themselves, and others was not only not lost, but **brought into greater clarity**. Which then applied to us also, because it tells us we too have a reunion with all of those we love, and who are in Jesus, awaiting us for all eternity. **And we won't somehow be trying to figure out how we know them. It will be clearer and purer than ever before ([1 Cor. 13:12](#))!**

- We then lightly discussed what we are going to dig into more deeply now, starting with an example of this truth found in [1 Sam. 28:15-20](#), where we can see a glimpse of the reality we just spoke about in the account of Saul going to the witch at Endor to summon Samuel from the dead.
- There it tells us, *"Now Samuel said to Saul, 'Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up (through this witch or medium)?' And Saul (king Saul) answered, 'I am deeply distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God has departed from me and does not answer me anymore, neither by prophets nor by dreams. Therefore I have called you, that you may reveal to me what I should do.' Then Samuel said: 'So why do you ask me, seeing the Lord has departed from you and has become your enemy? And the Lord has done for Himself as He spoke by me. For the Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David (king David). Because you did not obey the voice of the Lord nor execute His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore the Lord has done this thing to you this day (that's a clear working memory). Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The Lord will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines (that's information before the events even have occurred).' Immediately Saul fell full length on the ground, and was dreadfully afraid because of the words of Samuel. And*

there was no strength in him, for he had eaten no food all day or all night.”

- There are a few more things we should catch from this account. **1)** The first is that as Samuel tells Saul that he and his sons will die bodily the next day, **Samuel says they shall come to be with him.** And we know this is because “the place of the dead” (Sheol) is divided into two compartments (something we covered last time), being “Paradise” and “Torment”. **2)** And we hear that Samuel is not at all in the dark about who he is, who Saul and his sons are, and even the medium who called him up. **3)** Additionally, he was irritated because he was busy living his life in “Paradise” and got interrupted by having to deal with things of the fallen world which he no longer had to think about anymore (and we’re going to come back to some other details of this account in a few minutes).

Folks, if that was the state of the souls of those who had put their faith in God before Jesus had come into the world, would those who died bodily after Jesus had come with the new and better covenant ([Heb. 8:6](#)) **somehow be less aware of others and self, or less alive in any way?** Just let that question float until we pick it back up in the next section. But I think we can all already deduce the answer to this.

- So now is a good time to ask yourself if you need to update your views on the state of your **soul** if you were to die today and be in heaven. Many do.

Next we move to the question of what the state of the **body** was after death, before Jesus came, because as we spoke about last time, those who have put their faith in God before Jesus came (and those who put their faith in Jesus after He came) are **tripartite beings** (or consisting of three parts—body, soul, and spirit [[1 Thes. 5:23](#)], with the soul and spirit being forever intertwined).

We know **the bodies** of those who put their faith in God before Jesus came **will not rise until the rapture of the church** (which will also be the time that those who are in Jesus will rise. But we will come back to that in a different section).

- [1 Thes. 4:16](#) tells us this very thing, stating, *“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout (the Rapture), with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.”* And remember this is made possible because after Jesus’ crucifixion He first descended and gathered **the souls** of the Old Covenant saints to take them to heaven above. **Because they were waiting for the promise of the coming of the Messiah, and He came** (thank you Jesus)!
- So in the future, when Jesus comes for the church at the Rapture, those who died before will be raised bodily then, with all the rest of the saints of all time.
- But immediately following the death of their bodies (because the soul never dies), their bodies return to the dust (often termed “*sleep*” in the Bible because that body is **not** going to stay in the ground forever [see [John 11:11](#) & [14](#) speaking of Lazarus]). And [Ecc. 3:20](#) tells us this is going to happen to the body of everyone who dies before the rapture (first returning to the dust and then to be bodily resurrected).

If you didn’t catch it, that means the body you have now will one day be raised so that you may reside in it again forever. Yet when that time comes, your resurrected body will not age, become ill, or be given to a single sin, and will never die. **None of the conditions of the fall will impact your resurrected body ever again.** The theological term is “glorified”. And I am so excited for that day. Think about how this will impact your experiences in heaven. Will they be better or lesser than they are now?

So the next logical question might be, what **form** were they in as they waited for Messiah (Jesus) to come into the world? God has given different bodies for different functions. And what [1 Cor. 15:35-38](#) tells us is **the body must die in order for God to raise us up in a glorified one** (see also [2 Cor. 4:7-5:8](#)). Meaning, there is a guarantee of a better state of the body than what we currently know. **But what is it, and when?** And **the answer is again that it comes in stages.** So let’s look at some passages that give us insights for those

awaiting the bodily resurrection.

- Let's start by going back to what [Luke 9:28-33](#) told us about the appearance of *Moses and Elijah* at what is known as the transfiguration, where we're also given some insight into what Jesus' glorified body is like. There we hear from Peter, James, and John that they encountered these two saints of old, **1)** seeing and hearing them **2)** as these two stood beside Jesus. **3)** And their form was such that Peter (although misguided) wanted to build three little huts (one for each of them). That sure sounds like a state of being of these long-passed saints that indicates form or substance that can interact with other form, substance, people, and God. Yet their bodies still are awaiting the day of their resurrection at the Rapture.
- And are there any clues regarding the state of Samuel's body when Saul called him up? I believe so. It's found in [1 Sam. 28:13-14](#), reading, "*And the king (Saul) said to her (the medium), 'Do not be afraid. What did you see?'*" *And the woman said to Saul, 'I saw a spirit ascending out of the earth.'*" *So he said to her, 'What is his form (aren't you grateful for this question)?'*" *And she said, 'An old man is coming up, and he is covered with a mantle (robe).'*" *And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground and bowed down.'*" So **1)** Samuel's age is distinguishable by his appearance **2)** and he is clothed. Does this not require some form or some type of structure (and it's not a naked baby with wings 😊)?
- And listen to some of the pieces regarding the state or form of those who died bodily and are awaiting the bodily resurrection that we get from the rich man and Lazarus in [Luke 16:23-26](#). It says there, speaking of the rich man: "*And being in torments in Hades (the Greek counterpart of the Hebrew 'Sheol'), he (the rich man) lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off (so he has eyes and sight), and Lazarus in his bosom (it appears they have form and can bring comfort through personal contact). Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame (they have fingers, can thirst, and drink, having tongues).'*" *But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us (there are seemingly physical barriers).'*"

The best answer we can get for the state or form those who have died take during this time (and for those who die since Jesus came, while we are awaiting the rapture) has been termed "the intermediate state". We're going to come back to this in the next section. But what we do know from what we have studied today is we are not simply formless. Yet we also know our physical bodies will not be raised until the rapture.

- But here is why this is so important. Many have the idea that once they die, they will be a disembodied spirit floating around for eternity (or at least until our bodies are resurrected) with no ability to do so many of the things which God has given us in this life.
- First of all, do know that God is not giving us less in heaven than we have had on earth. Unless you are speaking of trials and losses. Those are going to simply disappear.
- But while you are awaiting the resurrection of your body (if you die in Jesus before the rapture), just like Samuel, you would not be delighted to be pulled back from heaven to deal with life in the fallen earth. Your experience in heaven will include you having form with sight, hearing, speaking, music, touch, relationships, and I dare say the best adventures you have ever had. And that's before the resurrection or transformation of our glorified body at the rapture of the church!

CROSS REFERENCES

Isa 65:16–17 NKJV – (16) So that he who blesses himself in the earth Shall bless himself in the God of truth; And he who swears in the earth Shall swear by the God of truth; Because the former troubles are forgotten, And because they are hidden from My eyes. (17) "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.

1Co 13:12 NKJV – For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

Heb 8:6 NKJV – But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.

1Th 5:23 NKJV – Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jhn 11:11 NKJV – These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up."

Jhn 11:14 NKJV – Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead.

Ecc 3:20 NKJV – All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust.

1Co 15:35–38 NKJV – (35) But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?" (36) Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. (37) And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain--perhaps wheat or some other grain. (38) But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.

Luk 9:28–33 NKJV – (28) Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. (29) As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. (30) And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, (31) who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. (32) But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. (33) Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, that Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"--not knowing what he said.