

THE LAST THINGS

Saturday

1. 0915-1015 - Death, intermediate state, return of Christ, judgment, vocabulary
2. 1045-1145 - Hell I
3. 1215-1300 - Hell II
4. 1630-1730 - Q & A / exercise / disputed questions

Sunday

5. 0915-1015 - Everything lasts
6. 1045-1145 - Glory I
7. 1215-1300 - Glory II / Hope

1. Death, intermediate state, return of Christ, judgment, vocabulary

a) Death

1. Types of death – temporal, spiritual, eternal
2. What life is - dust and breath ... death as separation of body and spirit – Ps 104.29-30; Eccl 12.7; Luke 8.55; James 2.26, Luke 23.46 Acts 7.59
3. Death as banishment from the land? = alienation from God/life – Gen 3, Deut 30
4. Rel of sin to death Gen 2.17 3.19, 22 Rom 5.12 8.10 I Cor 15.21.
5. Spiritual death - Gen 2.17 Matt 8.22 Jn 5.24-5 8.21, 24 Rom 6.23 Eph 2.1 Jas 5.20 Jude 12 Rev 3.1
6. Second death – Matt 10.28; Rev 2.11, 20.6, 14-15, 21.8
7. Death personified: Psalm 49. Acts 2.24 Rom 5.14, 17 I Cor 15.26 Rev 1.18 6.8 20.14.
8. Death as departure: Lk 2.29, 2 Tim 4.6 2 Peter 1.15
9. Death as sleep – see below.
10. Mortality – biblical metaphors and references?
- vapour, dust, shadow, flower, grass, chaff, mist
11. Examples of death / attitudes to death in Scripture?
 - death of enemies
 - dying well
 - death makes meaningless
 - Jesus wept
 - want to die / don't want to die
 - death of the upright
12. Christ's work and death - Rom 6.9 8.2 14.9 I Cor 3.21-22 15.23-26 54-55 Col 1.18 2 Tim 1.10 Heb 2.14-15 Rev 1.18 20.14, 21.4
13. OT hope after death? Next week - Gen 22 + Heb 11; Num 23.10 Job 19.25-7 Ps 16.9-11 17.15 49.14-15 73.24-6 Is 25.8 26.19 Ezekiel 37 Dan 12.2, 3, 13 Hos 6.2 13.14

b) Intermediate state

1. It is neither lawful nor expedient to inquire too curiously concerning our souls' intermediate state. Calvin; We are ignorant of what time means beyond the leap - H. Berkhof
2. Christians who die 'fall asleep', in that they cease to have any active relation to the present world - M.J. Harris
3. Sleep – Matt 9.24, 27.52, John 11.11, Acts 7.60, 13.36, I Cor 15.6, 18, 20, 51 I Thess 4.13, 5.10. “The phenomena of death, the absolute quiescence of the corpse, the withdrawal of the soul from all known and experienced activities of this life, and its entrance upon heavenly rest are abundantly sufficient to justify the calling of a Christian death, a 'sleep'” - Dabney. Phenomenological – the sun rises etc. (Note opposite – deep sleep = “dead to the world”)

4. Consciousness? Psalm 6.5, 115.17, Eccl 9.10 Is 38.19 Luke 16.19-31, 23.43, 2 Cor 5 – absent from the body, present with the Lord, Phil 1, 2 Peter 2.9, Heb 12.23 Revelation 6.9 Enoch, Elijah; Moses and Elijah at the transfiguration; rich man and Lazarus – in 1st C air; thought they saw a ghost/angel; Peter – Acts 12

5. What do we know?

- with Christ – Phil 1
- Paradise – Luke 23
- unclothed (cf earthly tent and heavenly dwelling) – II Cor 5

6. Can the spirits of the dead return? - Job 7.9-10, 10.21

Exceptions - Samuel, transfiguration, resurrections, Matthew 27

If allowed / commanded by God then the spirits of the dead may act on earth and even take bodily form.

Trying to communicate with the dead is wrong - Dt 18.9-12 Ex 22.18 Lev 20.6 Is 8.16-22

There may well be alternative explanations for many of those phenomena which people interpret as being contact with the spirits of the dead – demonic activity, human trickery, auto-suggestion etc

7. *What happened to Jesus between 1500 on Friday and 0500 on Sunday?*

- i. death is the sep of body from spirit (Jam 2, Eccl) (spiritual death is sep from God; eternal death is sep from God for ever)
- ii. there is some sort of conscious existence between death and judgment day (souls under altar in Rev; thief on cross; Lazarus and rich man; belief in ghosts - walk on water / Acts; Phil 1 - be with Christ; 2 Cor 5 - absent from body present with the Lord). this - by definition - is disembodied existence
- iii. since a human person IS body-spirit then this disembodied existence is abnormal
- iv. it is pleasant for the righteous and unpleasant for the unrighteous.
- v. Sheol/Hades can refer to the whole "unseen realm of the dead" or to the "unpleasant bit of the unseen realm of the dead". The good bit of the unseen realm of the dead can be called Abraham's bosom, Paradise, "with the Lord" and, of course, "heaven".
- vi. Death as "sleep" is a phenomenological description - like the sun rising. We describe the dead as they appear to us. That is not a statement about their consciousness or otherwise (indeed dreamers ARE conscious in their sleep). The dead - with respect to this world - are inactive like sleepers.
- vii. While disembodied existence, with the (embodied) Lord in heaven is good (2 Cor 5, Phil 1), it is not the hope of the believer. The believer hopes for resurrection-embodied existence, not in heaven but in the new heavens and new earth. 2 Cor 5 is imp-t here - Paul does not want to be "unclothed" even though that is with the Lord. His longing is for the heavenly building - the res-n body.
- viii. Now to Jesus. God the Son, incarnate is one person in two natures.
- ix. In his divine nature, the Word is impassible, immortal, omnipresent, omnipotent. He cannot and did not die, change, suffer in his divine nature.
- x. God the Son suffered and died - according to his human nature.
- xi. His humanity is true and full humanity. As man, Jesus is body and spirit.
- xii. The death of Jesus the man is the separation of body and spirit.
- xiii. So between Fri 1500 and Sun 0500, the person of the Word
 1. according to his divine nature, is ruling, omnipresent, eternal, unchanging
 2. according to his human nature, is dead - which means that his body and spirit are separated.
- xiv. His body is in the grave.
- xv. His spirit is in the unseen realm of the dead - Hades.

- xvi. As righteous, he is in the good bit of the unseen realm of the dead - hence his words to the thief on the cross.
- xvii. Maybe on his "way" to the good bit of the unseen realm of the dead he has performed the "harrowing of hell", namely
 - 1. announced his victory to the demons
 - 2. taken the OT righteous from a somewhat undifferentiated realm of the dead (though differentiated at some level too) and brought them into heaven.
- xviii. It was impossible for him to remain in Hades (the realm of the dead) - even the good bit called Paradise. He could not stay dead (body and spirit separated). So on Sun morning he was raised (his body was transformed and reunited to his spirit).
- xix. From the ascension on he has reigned as God-man in his glorified body in heaven. His is the only body in heaven - the rest (angels and the righteous) are disembodied spirits.
- xx. At the end of history his defeat of death will be made manifest (last enemy - 1 Cor 15) in the resurrection of the bodies of his people.
- xxi. and so we shall be full persons again - transformed bodies reunited with spirits. And NOT in "heaven" but in "the new heavens and new earth". Our hope is NOT to "go to heaven" (which happens to our spirit when we die. Our hope is resurrection morning - embodied and sinless existence in the new heavens and new earth.
- xxii. As for what the credal phrase "he descended into hell" means – "he really died".

c) The return of Christ

1. Main vocab

- a) coming / arrival / presence (I Thess) - 1Cor 15:23; 1The 2:19, 3:13, 4:15, 5:23; 2The 2:1, 2:8-9; James 5:7-8; 2Pet 3:4; 1Joh 2:28
- b) appearing / appearance - 2The 2:8; 1Tim 6:14; 2Tim 1:10, 4:1, 8; Tit 2:13
- c) revelation - 1Cor 1:7; 2The 1:7; 1Pet 1:7, 13, 4:13

2. Some other references: Matthew 13.30, 39-43, 24.36 - 25.46, Acts 1.11 17.31 I Cor 11.26 15.23-24 51-52 Phil 3.20-21 Col 3.4 I Thess 4.13 - 5.11 Heb 9.28 I Jn 3.2

3. Different sorts of comings

- 1. Christ coming to join his disciples - Luke 10.1 - a perfectly literal, normal use of the word.
- 2. The Second Coming (in the flesh) Acts 1.9-11, I Cor 15.23-24, Philippians 3.20-21, I Thess 4.16-18
- 3. Spiritual 'comings': John 14.16-18, 23 Revelation 3.20 - coming to fellowship, strengthen, comfort his people. ("Lord, come and be with us")
- 4. One of the most important of all OT passages - Daniel 7.13 - speaks of the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven to the Father to receive a kingdom. This was fulfilled at the ascension. See also - John 17.11,13
- 5. Coming in judgment in history: - Matthew 21.40-43; Revelation 2.5, 16. 3.3
 - in the OT God 'comes' in historical judgments: Psalm 18 // II Samuel 22.1-20; Habakkuk 3 (Judges 4-5 – God as the storm god); Isaiah 19.1; Ezek 32.1-16; Nahum 1.2-8; Micah 1.3-7
 - in the NT Christ 'comes' in historical judgments
 - in AD 70 Christ 'comes' in the greatest historical judgment *within history*
 - at the end of history Christ 'comes' in the ultimate, *to-end-history* judgment.
- 7. Some other key texts which get assigned to one or more of the categories above:
 - Matthew 10.23 16.28 24.27, 30 26.63-64
 - Revelation 1.7 22.7 22.12 22.20

4. A summary of NT teaching on the return of Christ

According to his promise, at the end of history, Christ will personally and visibly come again from heaven, in glory (with theophanic effects), with his angels and saints.

No-one knows the timing of Christ's glorious appearing but it will follow (and complete) the gathering of the elect. Its suddenness will dismay and terrify the ungodly but will not (unpleasantly) surprise believers who are to live as children of light staying alert and working hard precisely because they do not know when it will be.

Christ's coming is to wrap up history, raise the dead and judge the world in righteousness. All will acknowledge his Lordship, his enemies will be finally defeated and banished to punishment and his beloved welcomed into eternal glory.

5. Relationship to other events

Return and judgment and resurrection form a single complex of events – on “the Day” – the last things to happen. The end happens in one go:

II Thess 1.5-10 – judgment, coming and resurrection
Mark 8.38 – coming and judgment
I Corinthians 4.5 – coming and judgment
John 5.26-28 – resurrection and judgment
John 6.39-41, 44, 54 – resurrection and last day
Romans 2.5-16 – judgment, by Jesus Christ
I Cor 1.7-8 – revelation and day of Lord Jesus Christ (established to)
I Cor 15.23-28 – coming, resurrection, judgment
Phil 1.6 – day of Jesus Christ – end of the process
Phil 1.10 – day of Christ – the goal and termination
I Thess 4.13-5.11 – day of the Lord, coming of the Lord, judgment, resurrection
II Tim 1.12 – the guarding goes on until “that day”
II Peter 1.10, Jude 6 – the day, great day etc

6. Time unknown

- Surprise? I Thess 5
- 1st century - expect any day? Not while Peter alive or Jerusalem standing
- “Delay” - Matt 25.5, 14, 19
- Other things to happen? - remote, near, proximate signs ..
- Wait for return = expect in your life-time? I Thess 1, I Cor 1, Philippians 3
- 'To expect the Lord in our life-time is not a prerequisite of true piety - this would be to base the Christian life, in most generations, upon a falsehood.' Donald Macleod BT mag 82-3 p.20
- We are to watch ourselves, not for signs - ‘Watch’ means ‘be awake, active, alert’ - watchfulness is - get on with the job because you don't know when he is coming.

“Live today in the light of his certain coming” cf

“Live in the light of possible coming today”

d) Judgment

1. Distinguish particular and hidden from universal and manifest. Purpose of judgment: “The primary purpose of the Day of Judgement is to display to the entire universe the glory of God's character.” Blanchard
2. *References:* Matt 7.21 12.36 13.40-43 25.31-46 Luke 19.11-26 John 5.22-30 Acts 10.42 17.31 Rom 2.3-16 14.10-12 I Cor 3.10-15 4.5 2 Cor 5.10 2 Tim 4.1 Heb 9.27 Jude 6-7 Rev 20.11-15

The DAY - John 6.39-54 Rom 2.5 I Cor 1.8 Phil 1.6, 10 I Thess 5.2 2 Thess 1.10 2 Tim 1.12, 18 2 Peter 2.9 Jude 1.6 = last day = resurrection - John 5.28-29 6.39-40, 44, 54 Matt 13.29-30 49-50

3. According to works

Eccles 12.14 Matt 12.33ff, 16.27, 25.31-46 John 5.28-29 6.28ff Rom 2.5-11 2 Cor 5.10 Gal 6.7-10, Eph 6.8 Col 3.23-34 Rev 20.12, 22.12
How consist with justification by faith alone?
Matt 7.21 evidence not earn - prove family likeness, works out of union with Christ

4. Everything out?

Yes. Eccles 3.17, 12.14, Matt 12.26 (/s) 12.36-7, 16.27, 25.31-2, Luke 19.24-7, Romans 2.16, 14.10, I Cor 3.12-15, 4.5, 2 Cor 5.10, I Tim 5.24-5, Heb 4.13, 10.30, I Peter 1.17, Revelation 5.9-12, 20.11-13, 22.12

5. Rewards

- Matt 6.4 etc, Luke 14.14, 19.17 I Cor 1.4-8 3.8 15.32, 58 2 Cor 4.16 5.10 9.6-8 Gal 6.5-10 Phil 1.10, 26 2.16 Col 1.5 3.24 I Thess 2.19, 2 Thess 1.7 I Tim 4.8 5.25 6.18, 19 2 Tim 1.18, 2.11 4.4, 8, 14, 16
- There are rewards but:
 - 'heavenly' rewards no more imply merit than, e.g. answers to prayer
 - an evidence of God's sovereignty – he makes us to differ
 - the reward is a greater capacity to serve others - in charge of cities and this, of course, is only a reward if you want to serve
 - all the things that make differentiation unpleasant on earth will be eradicated in the new heavens and new earth
 - the reward is "who and what" we enter heaven as – if history is the raw material for eternity then ...
 - reward is a motivation – a mark of the Father's pleasure - like a smile
 - if holiness gives a greater capacity then can say "every good act/word/thought increases the joy of the new heavens and new earth"

2. and 3. Hell

- a) Key NT texts
- b) Main objections
- c) Conditionalism / annihilationism
- d) Problems of hell
- e) Other responses
- f) Universal salvation?

a) *Key NT texts*

- Matt 3.12 – unquenchable fire
- Matt 5.22 – Gehenna
- Matt 5.29-30 – Gehenna x 2
- Matt 7.13, 19 – destruction, fire
- Matt 7.21 – depart from me
- Matt 8.12 – outer darkness, weeping and gnashing
- Matt 8.29 – demons - torment
- Matt 10.15 – more tolerable
- Matt 10.28 - Gehenna
- Matt 11.22-3 – more tolerable
- Matt 13.42, 50 – furnace of fire, weep/gnash x 2
- Matt 18.8-9 – eternal fire, Gehenna of fire
- Matt 18.34 - torture
- Matt 22.13 – outer darkness, weep and gnashing
- Matt 23.15, 33 – Gehenna x 2
- Matt 24.51 – weeping and gnashing
- Matt 25.30 – outer darkness, weep and gnashing
- Matt 25.41-6 – eternal fire, eternal punishment
- Mark 9.43 – Gehenna, unquenchable fire
- Mark 9.45 - Gehenna
- Mark 9.47-8 – Gehenna, undying worm, unquenchable fire
- Luke 9.25 – lose life
- Luke 12.5 - Gehenna
- Luke 12:47-48 – light and severe beating
- Luke 13:28 – away from me, weep and gnashing
- Luke 16.23-4, 28 – (Hades) torment x2, agony x2
- John 3.16 – perish
- John 3.36 – wrath
- John 15.6 – fire
- Acts 24.25 – judgment
- Rom 2.8-9, 12 – wrath, fury, anguish, distress, perish
- Rom 6.21, 23 – death
- Rom 9.22 – destruction
- I Cor 3.17 – destruction
- I Cor 16.22 - curse
- II Cor 5.10 - recompense
- Phil 3.19 – destruction
- I Thess 1.10 – wrath
- I Thess 5.3 – destruction
- II Thess 1.7-9 – affliction, vengeance, eternal destruction, separated from .. our Lord
- James 3.6 - Gehenna
- Heb 6.2 – eternal judgment
- Heb 10.26-7 – judgment and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries
- Heb 10.39 - lost
- Heb 12.29 – God is a consuming fire
- II Peter 2.4 – (Tartarus), chains, deepest darkness until judgment
- II Pet 2.12-13 – destruction (corruption), suffering wrong
- II Pet 3.7 – destruction
- Jude 7 – eternal fire
- Jude 13 – deepest darkness, reserved forever
- Rev 14.11 – drink wine of God's wrath, tormented with fire and sulphur
- Rev 19.20 – (beast / false prophet) – lake of fire
- Rev 20.10 – (devil) – lake of fire
- Rev 20.15 – (those not in book life) – lake of fire
- Rev 21.8 – lake of fire = second death

b) *What are the main objections to this teaching?*

c) *What are we to make of conditionalism / annihilationism?*

1) *the language and imagery used:*

- a) *Fire* - but fire does not always consume! the point is the pain not the temporal limitation of the punishment;
- b) *Destroy/perish* - but the “destroy” words are used, for example, of the prodigal son, the wasted ointment, the burst wineskins – obviously the words don’t mean an absolute cessation of existence. Beast goes to destruction (17.8,11) but is tormented for ever (20.10); where ‘life’ and ‘destruction’ are contrasted, ‘life’ means more than mere existence. This is not about existing or not existing – it is about two qualitatively different sorts of existence;
- c) *Death* - death in the Bible does not mean cessation of existence but alienation from God – Gen 3, John 8, Eph 2;
Matt 10.28: the second death is to be feared MORE than mere physical death. Why, if it is simply extinction? (And if 'death' stands for more than merely extinction - ie the nexus of conscious torment followed by extinction - then clearly the mere use of the word 'death' solves nothing)
Matt 10.28: if death were the cessation of existence then it would be impossible to repeat the word 'body' (who can kill 'body and soul' ...)
- d) *Eternal* - but this is used parallel to eternal life – e.g Matthew 25.41, 46. It would be strange if the eternal punishment of v46 is not parallel to the eternal fire of v41. But the eternal fire of v41 is one in which the devil and his angels experience ECP - Revelation 20.10. Revelation 14.11 - // with 'no rest day and night' (cf 4.8 and contrast with eternal rest of believers in v13). Extinction would be a rest from the torment.

2) *theological objections:*

- a) If hell lasts for ever then God is never totally victorious over evil
BUT - crime punished is a good – it is a sign of the victory of righteousness, a vindication of the Lordship of Jesus, and a demonstration of the reign of justice and good;
- b) How is it just to punished eternally for 70 yrs of sin?
BUT - shd duration of punishment = time taken for crime?
- how severe is the crime?
- do the wicked in hell cease sinning?
- c) How could a God of love allow/cause this suffering? There can be no point in it. It cannot glorify God. It cannot be reconciled to God’s goodness.
BUT - same answers as to the problem of evil/suffering.
 - 1. Christians know that God exists and is good, all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-just and also that suffering exists and that therefore God MUST have a morally sufficient reason to allow/cause suffering even though he is not obliged to reveal it nor would finite and sinful humans necessarily be able to understand or accept it. The opponent must be able to say with complete confidence that there is no possible morally sufficient reason.
 - 2. Non-Christians need to account for a) their unbelief, b) their certainty that the existence of suffering is an 'evil' and to give c) reasons for the existence of suffering
- d) This would mar the joy of the blessed
BUT - the righteous will see and feel things God's way. If ECP of the wicked takes place at all then it will not mar heaven.
- e) The grace of God is sovereign - he could choose to curtail the torment of the damned at his will - and to mortal minds it would appear likely that he would do so
BUT - the grace of God does not work against the justice of God - it 'finds a way' to be, e.g. 'just and the one who justifies him who has faith in Jesus'. The way that grace has found for sinners to escape hell has itself not be taken by the damned.

d) *The “problems” of hell*

1. What about kindly Uncle Joe?
2. How literally are the Biblical images to be taken?
3. Are there different degrees of punishment?
4. Are these people human?
5. Do they continue to sin?
6. Would these people leave hell if they could?
7. What makes hell hell? Is God present in hell?

e) *Some other responses*

- how do you feel about the everlasting torment of Satan and demons (Matt 25.41, Rev 20.11-15)?
- what do feel your sin deserves when you are at your most godly?
- the mind of the church and the burden of proof
- annihilationists read the Bible over-literally – they think that banishment / torment / destruction are three distinct realities which follow in a sequence. Actually, they represent three ways of talking about the same reality
- 'But what of the poor Ghosts who never get into the omnibus at all?' 'Everyone who wishes it does. Never fear. There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done' and those to whom God says, in the end, 'Thy will be done.' All that are in Hell, choose it.' C.S. Lewis – *The Great Divorce*

f) *How do we and do we not hope for universal salvation?*

1) *Not like this:*

Jürgen Moltmann: *The Coming of God*, p.255: "The eschatological point of the proclamation of 'the Last Judgment' is the redeeming kingdom of God. Judgment is the side of the eternal kingdom that is turned towards history. In that Judgment all sins, every wickedness and every act of violence, the whole injustice of this murderous and suffering world, will be condemned and annihilated, because God's verdict effects what it pronounces. In the divine Judgment all sinners, the wicked and the violent, the murderers and children of Satan, the Devil and the fallen angels will be liberated and saved from their earthly perdition through transformation into their true, created being, because God remains true to himself, and does not give up what he has once created and affirmed, or allow it to be lost."

2) *But like this:*

The “world” will be saved and “all” will be saved: from every nation; of every sort and condition of human; all who are in Christ; all who count as truly, renewedly human; the race thought of as an organism, a race; all things in heaven and on earth. (And many Christians further believe, the overwhelming majority of human beings.)

4. Q & A / exercise / disputed questions

5. Everything lasts

Some evangelical Christians appear to believe that all that really counts is evangelism and they base this view, in part, upon the idea that, while the consequences of evangelism last forever, most other things that humans do are merely temporary. In what follows I claim that *everything* we do “lasts forever” in one way or another and argue this from

- 1) the bodily resurrection of Jesus;
- 2) the songs of the redeemed;
- 3) the good works of Christians;
- 4) the personal identity of the redeemed;
- 5) the fact and shape of redemptive history; and
- 6) what it means to be taken into the triune life of God.

Although demonstrating the error of the view that most non-evangelistic human activity does not last forever, these arguments do not directly affect our moral choices. However, more positively, they do provide affirmation of the eternal significance of *all* human activity from the most obscure “culture-building” endeavours through to the most mundane and repetitive acts of service and thus also provide theological underpinnings for the Reformed instinct that everything we do lasts and that everything we do matters.

6. and 7. Glory

a) The vocabulary of Christian hope – revision!

We're relatively uninterested in "heaven"!

How the hope of "heaven" misrepresents the Christian faith

- Different uses of the word heaven / heavens
- "Heaven" is rarely, if ever, used to describe the future eternal state of the blessed.
- It is rather, God's dimension, the created space occupied by angels, Jesus in his glorified body and the disembodied righteous.
- Our hope is not heaven. It is to behold, enjoy, share, and reflect the **glory** of God in resurrection bodies in the new heavens and the new earth. (see refs below)

Mt 19:28
Mk 10:37
Lk 24:26
Jn 7:39
Jn 17:5
Jn 17:24
Ac 7:55
Ro 2:7
Ro 2:10
Ro 5:2
Ro 8:17
Ro 8:21

Ro 9:23
1 Co 15:40-43
2 Co 3:18
2 Co 4:6
2 Co 4:17
Eph 1:18
Php 3:21
Col 1:27
Col 3:4
2 Th 1:10
2 Th 1:12
2 Th 2:14

2 Ti 2:10
Tit 2:13
Heb 2:9
1 Pe 1:7-8
1 Pe 5:1
1 Pe 5:4
1 Pe 5:10
Jud 24
Re 21:11
Re 21:23-4
Re 21:26

b) Hope for the physical universe?

Is the physical universe to be utterly destroyed and then replaced or is it to be renewed, transfigured, restored?

1) Presumption of continuity

- a) the creation is good and God has intentions for it
- b) analogy with resurrection of the body
- c) specific passages:

Isaiah 11
Habakkuk 2
Hosea 2.14-23
Matthew 19.28
Acts 3.21
Ephesians 1.9-10
Colossians 1.16-20
Romans 8.18-25

2) Two passages which suggest otherwise

- a) Revelations 21.1 – but see II Corinthians 5.17 - if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation: the old has passed away, the new has come. Language of old / new and passed away consistent with physical continuity and sustained personal identity.
- b) II Peter 3.10-13 – various detailed responses. Main point is vv6-7 – parallel with flood – there can be a world which perishes and a new world born but without the physical cosmos itself ceasing to exist. Paraphrase (Gale Z. Heide)

“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens as we know them will pass from sight with a roar and the order of this world will be refined with intense heat, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare for judgment. Since all these things are to be refined in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, anticipating and hastening the day of God, when the heavens will be refined by burning and the impure order of this world will melt in the intense heat of judgment! But according to his promise we are looking for renewed heavens and a renewed earth, in which righteousness dwells.”

c) *What are the characteristics of “glory”?*

What is glory?

What does it mean for a human being to be “glorified”?

The glory of God – displayed, beheld, enjoyed

- the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour
- Christ IS the end. Glory is Christ – Col 1, Titus 2, I Peter 1
- the vision of God – seeing and serving God - Revelation 22.4; I Cor 13.12; Matt 5.8; John 17.24; I John 3.2 what will be seen; how shall it be seen?
- perfect knowledge of God – yet ever-deepening – I Cor 13
- the presence of God, dwelling of God with humankind, Lord and the Lamb are the temple, forever with the Lord, Yahweh-Shammah - Zeph 3.14-20, Is 65-6
- a world of love - of these three, love remains - I Cor 13, I Jn 3
- living in the light of the Lord - Revelation 21.23-5, 22.5
- the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father

The triumph of righteousness

- destruction and punishment of evil
- vindication of Christ and all that is good
- reward of the good – crowns and cities
- eradication of death and all its associates – eternal Life
- eradication of sin – no sinful hearts, sinful actions, temptations to sin, effects of sin, will to sin – perfect sinless obedience; fully restored image – sharing the likeness of the man of heaven
- perfect life of perfect service and perfect praise / singing / worship

Restoration of all things

- resurrection of the body – bodies of glory
- reunited and renewed humanity – perfect fellowship with the saints; perfect peace across humankind; the body of Christ now wholly mature
- reigning with Christ – the kingdom of God in its fullness
- perfect union with Christ – marriage banquet, consummation
- every faculty absolutely perfect - perfect will to will his will; emotions; imagination; body; memory; mind
- transformed and glorified universe - new heavens and new earth in which righteousness dwells; the perfect environment, liberated universe
- home - the looked-for City, strived-for Rest (Hebrews), house with many rooms, New Jerusalem, restored Eden, end of pilgrimage and alienation
- delight – banquet, pleasures for evermore, joy at right hand, satisfied
- growth without frustration; change without disappointment; certainty without boredom

“It does not yet appear what we shall be” – I John 3.1-3

d) *Some common questions ...*

1. Will there be knowledge of our sins?
2. And of the existence of hell?
3. What age shall we be?
4. What are the “rewards” in the new heavens and earth?
5. Will we know each other?
6. What will we do?
7. Will we learn, grow, and work?
8. Will there be bacon sandwiches there?
9. And marriage?
10. How about my dog?
11. In view of the new heavens and the new earth, why does what we do now matter?