

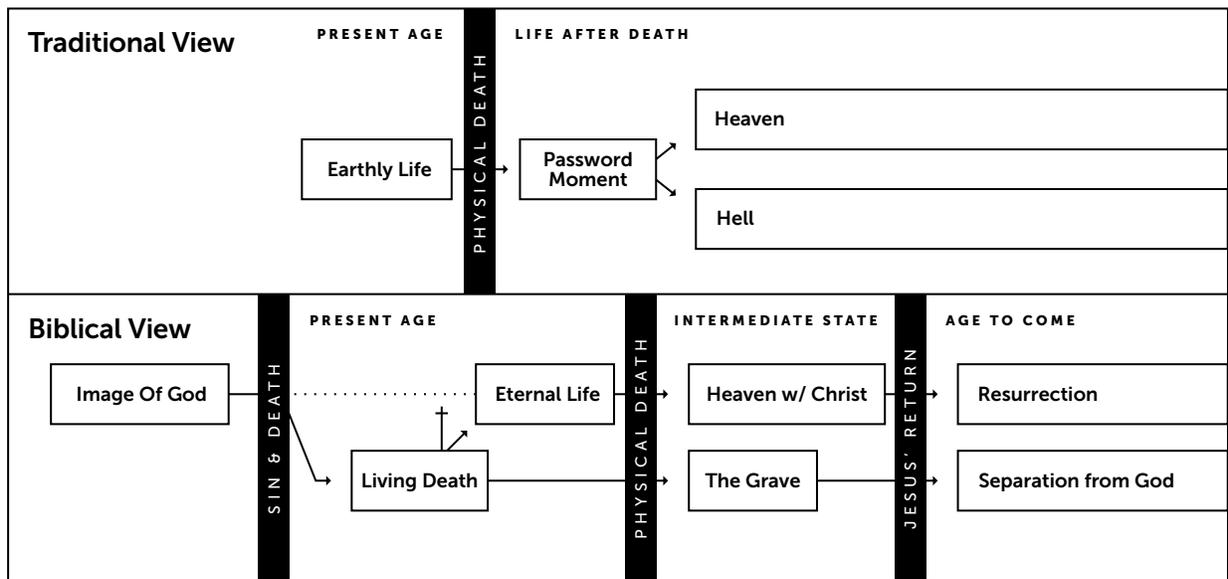
EXPLORING MY STRANGE BIBLE

WITH TIM MACKIE



Tragedy and Hope: Biblical Perspectives on Heaven and Hell

Traditional View vs. Biblical View



The Life of the Image Bearers

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

GENESIS 1:26-28

- "Image" (Hebrew tselem): physical representation of the king to the world
- "Rule" (Hebrew radah): stewarded authority over the world's resources
- Humans are royal representatives of the Creator called to oversee the flourishing of God's world.

And the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed,...

GENESIS 2:7-8

- Humans: dirt and divine breath (ruakh) = living being (nephesh)
- "Soul" is a common (and unhelpful!) translation of nephesh.
- "A 'soul' is the living individual, not in the sense of a separate indestructible spiritual substance, but in the sense of concrete, needy, physical life."

WILLIAM DYRNESS, OUTLINE OF OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY.

SEE ALSO PSALM 42:1

- Humans do not have souls; humans are souls.

The Sin and Death of the Image Bearers

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

GENESIS 2:15-17

Summary:

- Trust and obedience results in life.
- Rebellion and mistrust results in death.
 - "Death": a separation of what was never intended to be separated.
 - » Relational Death: isolation and fear of others.

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

GENESIS 3:7
 - » Spiritual death: moral and spiritual separation from God.

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in those who are disobedient.

EPHESIANS 2:1-2
 - » Physical death: a schism between the material and immaterial.

By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."

GENESIS 3:19

Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come... before the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

ECCLESIASTES 12:1, 7

If God were to take back his spirit and withdraw his breath, all life would cease, and humanity would turn again to dust.

JOB 34:14-15

Key Implications

- Humans are not inherently immortal, nor is the human soul an immortal, separable part of the human person. Humans have a material and immaterial makeup. Death brings an unnatural schism between those two that is not permanent or desirable.
- According to Genesis 2-3, human immortality is a gift from God which we forfeited through our sin. The rest of the story is about that gift.
- All humanity exists in a state of living death because of sin.

Christ Conquers Sin and Destroys Death

God enters sinful humanity and bears the pain of sin and death.

Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death. Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying.

HEBREWS 2:14-15

Through his resurrection he conquers sin and death and offers us life.

For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives. Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. We know that our old sinful humanity was crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him. We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him. When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God.

ROMANS 6:4-10

Eternal life and eternal death are present realities that will continue on into the future.

"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come 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 he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.

JOHN 5:24-29

"Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

JOHN 17:1-3

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

COLOSSIANS 1:13-14

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in those who are disobedient.... But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.

Life after Death: The Intermediate State

Meaning: temporary state of existence between physical death and physical resurrection

Biblical teaching

- Sheol (שְׁאוֹל), Hades (ᾍδης): "grave, tomb," the place where all the dead go.
All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but Jacob refused to be comforted. "No," he said, "in mourning will I go down to the grave to my son." So his father wept for him.

GENESIS 37:35

Those who belong to Christ—in heaven with Christ

Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

LUKE 23:42-43

For I fully expect and hope that I will never be ashamed, but that I will continue to be bold for Christ, as I have been in the past. And I trust that my life will bring honor to Christ, whether I live or die. For to me, living means living for Christ, and dying is even better. But if I live, I can do more fruitful work for Christ. So I really don't know which is better. I'm torn between two desires: I long to go and be with Christ, which would be far better for me. But for your sakes, it is better that I continue to live.

PHILIPPIANS 1:20-24

Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:6-9

Those who belong to themselves, Scripture doesn't describe their existence other than "the grave."

And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done.

REVELATION 20:12-13

Views on the Intermediate State

- Immaterial self exists in a non-physical but conscious state:
...I saw under the altar the souls of all who had been martyred for the word of God and for being faithful in their testimony. They shouted to the Lord and said, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you judge the people who belong to this world and avenge our blood for what they have done to us?" Then a white robe was given to each of them. And they were told to rest a little longer until the full number of their brothers and sisters—their fellow servants of Jesus who were to be martyred—had joined them.

REVELATION 6:9-11

Soul Sleep: the immaterial self "sleeps" with Christ until the resurrection.

- "Sleep" is a common, non-literal metaphor for death:
Then Jesus said, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but now I will go and wake him up." The disciples said, "Lord, if he is sleeping, he will soon get better!" They thought Jesus meant Lazarus was simply sleeping, but Jesus meant Lazarus had died.

JOHN 11:11-13

Roman Catholic: Purgatory

- Those who are baptized in the Church but are still compromised by sin must spend time in purgatory, which is a process (not a place) leading to total purification and later entrance into God's presence.
- Purgatory can be shortened by prayers of loved ones or monetary offerings to the church.
SEE THE APOCRYPHAL TEXT 2 MACCABEES 12:42-44
- Bottom line: Purgatory is mentioned nowhere in Scripture, and it undermines the sufficiency of Jesus' death to deal with all of our sins.

1 JOHN 2:1-2; HEBREWS 7:23-28

Messiah's Return Brings Final Judgment

Old Testament "Day of the Lord"

- The removal of evil and injustice from God's world
"Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire," says the LORD Almighty. "Not a root or a branch will be left to them. But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall.

MALACHI 4:1-2

Judgment will be "according to works."

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.

MATTHEW 16:24-27

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:10

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done.

REVELATION 20:11-13

- » Note: This “judgment according to works” must be understood in light the New Testament teaching that because of the Spirit’s work in believers, all failures are forgiven and obedience is truly possible.

ROMANS 8:1-11

Repentance and response is crucial on the day of judgment.

In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.”

ACTS 17:30-32

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

2 PETER 3:9

Life after Life after Death: Messiah’s Return Brings Resurrection

Old Testament roots:

- Main view: the grave is the end.

Just as a cloud dissipates and vanishes, those who go down to the grave will not come back. They are gone forever from their home—never to be seen again.

JOB 7:9-11

Man’s fate is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: As one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath; man has no advantage over the animal. Everything is meaningless. All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return. Who knows if the spirit of man rises upward and if the spirit of the animal goes down into the earth?”

ECCLESIASTES 3:19-21

- Glimmers of hope: Yahweh’s faithfulness extends beyond the grave.

No man can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for him—the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough—that he should live on forever and not see decay. For all can see that wise men die; the foolish and the senseless alike perish and leave their wealth to others. Their tombs will remain their houses forever, their dwellings for endless generations, though they had named lands after themselves...But God will redeem my life from the grave; he will surely take me to himself.

PSALM 49:7-15

On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine—the best of meats and the finest of wines. On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.

ISAIAH 25:6-8

- God's persecuted people can hope for final justice in the resurrection.
Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

DANIEL 12:2-3

Resurrection to Eternal Death

Kaleidoscope view of eternal death

- Hell is an eternal continuation of the present state of living death.
 - It is not a surprise at the end of the game.
 - It is the end result of an entire life trajectory of increasing separation from God.
- Hell is real, and it is described by metaphor and imagery in the Bible. Each image gives us an insight into the unknown reality of eternal death.

Images for eternal death in the Bible

- Fire—Old Testament roots: God's judgment consumes evil.
"Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire," says the LORD Almighty. "Not a root or a branch will be left to them.

MALACHI 4:1

Therefore wait for me," declares the LORD, "for the day I will stand up to testify. I have decided to assemble the nations, to gather the kingdoms and to pour out my wrath on them—all my fierce anger. The whole world will be consumed by the fire of my passionate anger.

ZEPHANIAH 3:8

- Hell
 - Greek: gehenna (γέεννα), comes from a Hebrew gai-ben-hinnom, and Aramaic gai-hinnam = "Valley of Hinnom" a valley in southwest Jerusalem.
 - A valley where child-burning sacrifices were performed by Israel's apostate kings.
Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. He did not do what was pleasing in the sight of the LORD, as his ancestor David had done. Instead, he followed the example of the kings of Israel. He cast metal images for the worship of Baal. He offered sacrifices in the valley of Ben-Hinnom, even sacrificing his own sons in the fire. In this way, he followed the detestable practices of the pagan nations the LORD had driven from the land ahead of the Israelites.

2 CHRONICLES 28:1-3,

[The LORD said to Jeremiah] "Go out to the Valley of Ben Hinnom, near the entrance of the Potsherd Gate. There proclaim the words I tell you, and say, 'Hear the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah and people of Jerusalem. This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "Listen! I am going to bring a disaster on this place that will make the ears of everyone who hears of it tingle. For they have forsaken me and made this a place of foreign gods; they have burned sacrifices in it to gods that neither they nor their fathers nor the kings of Judah ever knew, and they have filled this place with the blood of the innocent. They have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as offerings to Baal—something I

did not command or mention, nor did it enter my mind. So beware, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when people will no longer call this place Topheth ["place of burning"] or the Valley of Ben Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter. In this place I will ruin the plans of Judah and Jerusalem. I will make them fall by the sword before their enemies, at the hands of those who seek their lives, and I will give their carcasses as food to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth."

JEREMIAH 19:2-7

- Gehenna became a vivid metaphor in Judaism to describe the final judgment.
- Used primarily by Jesus

- » "Fire of hell"

But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell.

MATTHEW 5:22, MARK 9:43

- » "Thrown into hell"

So if your eye—even your good eye—causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

MATTHEW 5:29, MARK 9:45, 47

- » "Body and soul destroyed in hell"

Don't be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot touch your soul. Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

MATTHEW 10:28, LUKE 12:5

- » "Judgment of hell"

Snakes! Sons of vipers! How will you escape the judgment of hell?

MATTHEW 23:33

- "Eternal fire"

Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, "Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons..." And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life.

MATTHEW 18:8; 25:41, 46

- "Fire" in the book of Revelation

- "Fire and sulphur"

Then a third angel followed them, shouting, "Anyone who worships the beast and his statue or who accepts his mark on the forehead or on the hand must drink the wine of God's anger. It has been poured full strength into God's cup of wrath. And they will be tormented with fire and burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb. The smoke of their torment will rise forever and ever, and they will have no relief day or night, for they have worshiped the beast and his statue and have accepted the mark of his name." This means that God's holy people must endure persecution patiently, obeying his commands and maintaining their faith in Jesus.

REVELATION 14:9-12

TAKEN FROM STORY OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH (GENESIS 19:24)

- "Lake of fire"

I saw the dead, both great and small, standing before God's throne. And the books were opened, including the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to what they had done, as recorded in the books. The sea gave up its dead, and death and the grave gave up their dead. And all were judged according to their deeds. Then death and the grave were thrown into the lake of fire. This lake of fire is the second death. And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire.

REVELATION 20:12-15

TAKEN FROM THE IMAGE OF FIRE COMING FROM GOD'S THRONE IN DANIEL 7:9-11

• Darkness: Jesus refers to "outer darkness"

MATTHEW 8:12; 22:13; 25:30

TAKEN FROM PLAGUE OF DARKNESS ON EGYPT IN EXODUS 10:22-23

• Remorse and sadness: "weeping and gnashing teeth"

MATTHEW 8:12; 13:42; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30

And I tell you this, that many Gentiles will come from all over the world—from east and west—and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the feast in the Kingdom of Heaven. But many Israelites—those for whom the Kingdom was prepared—will be thrown into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

MATTHEW 8:11-13

• Eternal relational separation from God

Punished with eternal destruction, forever separated from the Lord and from his glorious power.

2 THESSALONIANS 1:9

- "Destruction" does not mean cessation of existence, but loss of purpose, i.e. ruined, lost.

SEE MATTHEW 9:17; LUKE 9:24

- "Forever separated" is literally "away from the face"—cut off from relationship.

For Paul the ultimate judgment is to be forever incapable of knowing God's presence as it has been revealed in Christ. For beings created in the divine image this is the ultimate desolation. Paul's emphasis is on their being shut out from God's presence, the ultimate loss.

GORDON FEE, 1 AND 2 THESSALONIANS, 260.

- Willful, eternal choice to be independent from God

There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, "Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire." But Abraham replied, "Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us." He answered, "Then

I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment." Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them." "No, father Abraham," he said, "but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent." He said to him, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead."

LUKE 16:19 - 17:1

Notes on Luke 16

- The rich man does not want to leave hell.
- He is blind, not self-aware, and he only wants to bring others into his hell.
- He exists in a state of eternal denial and blameshifting.

Hell is God's leaving a sinful human with the particular character that the person fashioned for themselves in this life. The misery one will experience from having to live with one's wicked self will be proportionate to one's degree of awareness of precisely what one was doing when choosing evil.

MILLARD ERICKSON, CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY, P.1248.

Reflections on the very idea of hell

- Hell is a necessary possibility for creatures designed to experience their Creator's eternal love. For love to exist, there must also exist the possibility of love being rejected.
- Hell is a necessary possibility for creatures who are given genuine freedom to choose good or evil:

From the fundamental truth that God is love, it follows that he pays us the compliment of treating all our actions as significant.

STANLEY GRENZ, THEOLOGY FOR THE COMMUNITY OF GOD, P.641.

- God desires that no one choose eternal death.
[God our Savior] who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

1 TIMOTHY 2:4

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

2 PETER 3:9

- God does not "send" anyone to hell:
"God created humans to have fellowship with him and has provided the means by which they can do so; it is a person's choice to experience hell. His or her own sin sends them there." (Millard Erickson, Christian Theology, p.1247). Hell is God honoring human freedom to choose an existence independent from their Creator. In the long run, the answer to those who object to the doctrine of hell is itself a question: What is it that they are asking God to do? To wipe out past sins and at all costs give them a fresh start? He did that, on the cross. To forgive them? But they don't want forgiveness. To leave them alone? That's what hell is. 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. Without that self-choice, it wouldn't be hell.

C.S. LEWIS, THE GREAT DIVORCE.

Resurrection to Eternal Life in the New Creation

Nearly every Christian I have spoken with has some idea that eternity is an unending church service...we have settled on an image of the never-ending sing-along in the sky, one great hymn after another, forever and ever, amen....And our heart sinks."

JOHN ELDRIDGE, THE JOURNEY OF DESIRE

Resurrection: life in a transformed physical existence

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

PHILIPPIANS 3:20-21

SEE ALSO 1 CORINTHIANS 15:35-58; 1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18

Resurrection: life in a redeemed physical creation

"Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands. They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants with them. Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain," says the LORD.

ISAIAH 65:17-25

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.

REVELATION 21:1

The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

ROMANS 8:19-23

New Creation: reuniting heaven and earth, God and humanity

I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

REVELATION 21:2-5

I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.

REVELATION 21:22-23

New Creation: a new world of human flourishing

- Restored "rule" of humanity

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

REVELATION 22:1-5

TAKEN FROM GENESIS 1:26

- Redeemed culture in Revelation 21

The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

REVELATION 21:23-27

Where our minds rarely go is to the eternal state, where we'll spend eternity... where we'll live forever after the culminating event of human history that's linked to Christ's return—our resurrection. We'll reign over a resurrected universe, centered on a resurrected earth... We will eat, drink, work, play, worship, discover, invent, and travel. Civilization will be resurrected, including human cultures with distinctive ethnic traits. There will be both resurrected nature and human culture. Together these elements combine to distinguish the eternal state, where God will come down and live with his people.

RANDY ALCORN, HEAVEN