

01-22-12

Series: [The Resurrections](#)

The Resurrections (55)

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[Matthew 28:1-10](#)

(Continuation from [01-15-12](#))

The Doctrine of the Resurrections

The Intermediate State

A basic definition of the **intermediate state** would be as follows:

The intermediate state is that condition or state of existence between the time of a person's death and the time that they receive new resurrection bodies.

The biblical term for the believer receiving a new body is the biblical doctrine of **glorification**. It is described in [1 Corinthians 15:35-49](#). Obviously, these will be bodies different from those that we currently have, but at the same time they will be very similar in nature and their fundamental characteristics. We will still be able to function as we do now – talk, hear, see, feel, touch, think, evaluate. I personally believe that we will still eat and breathe and do things as we do now. Apparently Christ did those things when He returned to the earth after His resurrection. We know that we are going to have a marriage supper with Him ([Revelation 19:5-10](#)).

If we could phrase all of this in the form of a question, we might ask the following: **“Where does someone go when they die, and what is their state or condition in that location?”** The doctrine of the intermediate state implies that between a person's death and the resurrection of their body, there is an intermediate and intervening state in which the individual ***does not possess a body as they currently have*** and are waiting for the future resurrection of their body for the eternal state. I am trying to be very careful at this point simply because it is not clear as to what kind of body a **lost** person who has died currently has, or when they will get a different kind of body. It simply is not fully clear to me personally. What we affirm is that a person's **intermediate condition** will vary based on whether or not that person was saved or lost when they died.

So, the question would be this: **“Is this intermediate state in heaven for the saved and in hell for the lost?”** If that is the case, then respectively they would either experience the presence of God and His blessings or the absence of God and His judgments. It is not known whether or not the intermediate state would be less intense than the final or eternal state, but they are still of the same qualitative nature – either suffering or blessing.

There is not a great deal of information in the Scriptures relative to this subject. And to make it even more difficult, the idea of an **“intermediate state”** is not something that

01-22-12

Series: [The Resurrections](#)

has wide theological agreement. The arguments for it, both pro and con, have seemed to vacillate during different periods of the church. In fact, the Roman Catholic false doctrine of purgatory somewhat developed from this idea of an intermediate state. The biblical references to this idea are fairly scarce as well. When we discuss the various resurrections or the Second Coming, there will be plenty of Scriptural references to either of those subjects – but not with the term “**intermediate state**”. In fact, the term “**intermediate state**” is not even a Scriptural term, but simply a theological expression that has been developed to identify this particular state of being. In some ways, we must admit that it is somewhat problematic. The question that this term generates is simply **what is the condition of the individual during this period of time and where is the individual located?**

Obviously, the **intermediate state** is not a permanent state, but a temporary state between the time of a person’s death and the resurrection of their body at whatever time that may occur eschatologically based on their salvation or lack of salvation. It may occur at the Rapture, at the Second Coming, or at the Final Judgment of the wicked when they will be cast into the Lake of Fire. It should be noted that most of the biblical passages refer more to the eternal state rather than the intermediate state.

There is a very false doctrine that I only mention at this point simply because you have probably heard of it in some form in the past. It is called “**soul sleep**”, and is a false doctrine that states that once someone dies that the soul remains unconscious until it is resurrected to be with the Lord or resurrected for the final judgment. It should be noted that the Scriptures seem to clearly speak of the **intermediate state** as a very conscious existence, not some kind of temporary repose.