

BIBLICAL ESCHATOLOGY

Royce Dickinson, Jr.

1. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781): “The whole interest of reason, speculative as well as practical, is centred in the three following questions: (1) What can I know? (2) What ought I to do? (3) What may I hope?”
 - What can I know? — epistemology — faith (1 Cor 13:13)
 - What ought I to do? — ethics — love (1 Cor 13:13)
 - What may I hope? — eschatology — hope (1 Cor 13:13)

2. Eschatology:
 - “Derived from the Greek word *eschatos*, meaning ‘last’ or ‘final,’ eschatology is teaching about ‘the last things.’ It refers to a time in the future when the course of history will be changed to such an extent that one can speak of an entirely new state of reality.”¹
 - “Greek ‘knowledge of the last things.’ That branch of systematic theology which studies God’s final kingdom as expressed by its Old Testament preparation (e.g., the messianic hopes), the preaching of Jesus, and the teaching of the New Testament church. . . . More than a mere branch of theology, eschatology denotes that future-directedness of our entire present existence.”²
 - “In the twentieth century at least three basic forms of eschatology have developed. *Consistent*, or thoroughgoing, eschatology is the view that the teaching of Jesus and the apostles is thoroughly concerned with proclaiming the imminent end of history. *Realized* eschatology views the first coming of Jesus Christ itself as the full presence of the kingdom of God. *Inaugurated* eschatology sees the first coming of Christ as the beginning of the kingdom in the present, while acknowledging that the consummation or fulfillment of the kingdom of God is yet to come.”³

¹David L. Petersen, “Eschatology,” in David Noel Freedman, ed., *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (Doubleday, 1992), 2:575.

²Gerald O’Collins and Edward G. Farrugia, *A Concise Dictionary of Theology*, rev. and exp. ed. (Paulist Press, 2000), 79.

³Stanley J. Grenz, David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* (InterVarsity Press, 1999), 46 (emphasis–italicized words–is mine, RDJr). My beliefs (Royce) fall within the broad category of “inaugurated eschatology” as I see this as the viewpoint of the New Testament. With Jesus Christ’s first coming the New Age begins (the beginning of the end of the Old Age); however, the

- “Eschatology is the completion of creation.”⁴
- “But *Christian* eschatology has nothing to do with apocalyptic ‘final solutions’ of this kind, for its subject is not ‘the end’ at all. On the contrary, what it is about is the new creation of all things. Christian eschatology is the remembered hope of the raising of the crucified Christ, so it talks about beginning afresh in the deadly end. ‘The end of Christ – after all that was his true beginning,’ said Ernst Bloch. Christian eschatology follows this christological pattern in all its personal, historical and cosmic dimensions: *in the end is the beginning*.”⁵

3. Jürgen Moltmann, *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology*, trans. by Margaret Kohl (Fortress Press, 1996).

- Personal Eschatology — Eternal Life
- Historical Eschatology — The Kingdom of God
- Cosmic Eschatology — New Heaven & New Earth
- Divine Eschatology — Glory (“God will be all in all.”—1 Cor 15:28)

4. Schedule of subjects for study in this class:

- Personal Eschatology
 - The nature of our being
 - Body, soul & life everlasting
 - Death: the consequence of sin or life’s natural end?
 - Immortality of the soul or resurrection of the body?
 - Where are the dead?
 - The resurrection
 - The judgment
- Historical Eschatology
 - The parousia (Second Coming)
 - The problem of its delay
 - The end of history (termination) or history’s end (destination)?

Old Age does not end until Jesus Christ’s second coming (the end of the beginning of the New Age as now the New Age is fully realized). Consequently, we now live between the ages—between the “now already” and the “not yet”—during the overlapping of the ages. An example of inaugurated eschatology is the Holy Spirit: it is both a present possession (now already) and the down payment for a future inheritance (not yet).

⁴Richard Bauckham, ed., *God Will Be All in All: The Eschatology of Jürgen Moltmann* (Fortress Press, 1999), 9. I (Royce) prefer this definition as it highlights God’s faithfulness to His creation and hopes that God will indeed finish what He has begun.

⁵Jürgen Moltmann, *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology*, trans. by Margaret Kohl (Fortress Press, 1996), xi.

- The millennium
- Cosmic Eschatology
 - Creation: its annihilation or its consummation?
 - Heaven
 - Hell
- Divine Eschatology — “God will be all in all” (1 Cor 15:28)
- Eschatology: so what? What difference does it make?
 - Eschatology & epistemology: living by faith.
 - Eschatology & ethics: living and loving.
 - Eschatology: living in hope.

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BIBLICAL ESCHATOLOGY

Personal Eschatology: The Nature of Our Being

Royce Dickinson, Jr.

1. Body, soul & life everlasting⁶
 - The central issue is whether the soul can survive and function apart from the human body. This, in turn, raises the question of the nature of biblical anthropology.
 - Monism: with reference to human nature, the theory that humans consist of one substance (eliminates the body–soul distinction).
 - Dualism: with reference to human nature, the theory that humans consist of two substances (maintains the body–soul distinction).
 - Are we an embodied soul or an animated body?
 - The argument for “holistic dualism.”⁷ Ontologically, we are dualistic. Functionally, we are holistic. This issue is not so much one of pro or con regarding dualism, but rather how intimately and extensively the two substances are thought to interact and influence each other.⁸
 - Key texts: Gen 1:26-27; 2:7, 21-23; Matt 10:28; 1 Cor 7:34; 1 Thess 5:23.⁹
2. Death: the consequence of sin or life’s natural end?
 - What is death? What dies at death? If we are more than the sum of our organs, then does that something more survive the death of our organs?
 - What is “nature” or “natural”? “Nature” and “natural” to us means creation as it is. However, creation as it is *is not* creation as it was created *nor* is it creation as it will be.

⁶For much of this discussion, I (Royce) am indebted primarily to John W. Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism-Dualism Debate* (Eerdmans, 1989); and secondarily to David G. Myers, *The Human Puzzle: Psychological Research & Christian Belief* (Harper & Row, 1978).

⁷Cf. the language of D. E. H. Whiteley, *The Theology of St. Paul* (Blackwell, 1964), 38, who speaks of Paul’s “modification of the unitary view” of humanity.

⁸“Although the soul’s existence does not depend on the body, its functioning does, at least as far as we can tell. It is like a light bulb and the brain like a socket. The bulb can exist apart from the socket, but not light up” (Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*, 242).

⁹Concerning the Pauline perspective of the human person, “recent scholarship has recognized that such terms as body, soul, and spirit are not different, separable faculties of each individual but different ways of viewing the whole person” (George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, rev. ed. (Eerdmans, 1993), 499).

- For the most part (particularly the New Testament), death is depicted as “a ruinous power contrary to God and hostile to life,”¹⁰ and it is “the last enemy” to be conquered.
- If the wages of sin are death, are the wages of death sin?¹¹
- Although there is tension between the ideas, it can be maintained that death is *both* the consequence of sin *and* life’s “natural” end.
- Key texts: Gen 2:15-17; 3:1-24; Rom 6:23; 1 Cor 15:26, 54-59; Jas 1:15; Rev 21:4 (Isa 25:8).

3. Immortality of the soul or resurrection of the body?

- “The New Testament certainly knows the difference between body and soul, or more precisely, between the inner and the outer man. This distinction does not, however, imply opposition, as if the one were by nature good, the other by nature bad. Both belong together, both are created by God. The inner man without the outer has no proper, full existence. It requires a body. It can, to be sure, somehow lead a shady existence without the body, like the dead in Sheol according to the Old Testament, but that is not a *genuine life*. The contrast with the Greek soul is clear: it is precisely apart from the body that the Greek soul attains to full development of its life. According to the Christian view, however, it is the inner man’s very nature which demands the body.”¹²
- “Paul has more to say about the resurrection than any other writer in the New Testament. Redemption applies to the whole person, including the body (Rom 8:23). Paul often contrasts the sufferings of earthly existence with the future glory (Rom 8:18), but he never considers bodily life in itself an evil thing from which he longs to be freed. Rather than being discarded, the body, which often humiliates us, it to be transformed and glorified (Phil 3:21). The Holy Spirit who has quickened our spirits will also give fullness of life to our mortal bodies in the

¹⁰Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 81. Moltmann explores not only the concept of “natural death,” but even the terminology itself. Among his observations, he writes: “The notion of a ‘natural death’ is appropriate only for life-insured denizens of the affluent society, who can afford a death in old age like this. Most people in the Third World today die an unnatural, premature, violent, and by no means affirmed death, like most of the people of my generation who died in the Second World War. Their life is broken off short before it has really been lived at all” (118).

¹¹Adam and Eve apparently believed the serpent’s lie that “you will not die.” The failure to acknowledge their mortality led to the usurpation of God. The desire to be more than human led to being even less like God. “Lord, teach us to remember that we must die, so that we may become wise” (Martin Luther’s translation of Ps 90:12).

¹²Oscar Cullmann, *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead? The Witness of the New Testament* (Epworth Press, 1958), 32-33.

- resurrection (Rom 8:11). Paul's doctrine of the resurrection is grounded in his unitary view of humanity."¹³
- "The immortality of the soul is an opinion – the resurrection of the dead is a hope. The first is a trust in something immortal in the human being, the second is a trust in the God who calls into being the things that are not, and makes the dead live. In trust in the immortal soul we accept death, and in a sense anticipate it. In trust in the life-creating God we await the conquest of death – 'death is swallowed up in victory' (I Cor. 15.54) – and an eternal life in which 'death shall be no more' (Rev. 21.4). The immortal soul may welcome death as a friend, because death releases it from the earthly body; but for the resurrection hope, death is 'the last enemy' (I Cor. 15.26) of the living God and the creations of his love."¹⁴
 - Key texts: Resurrection of Jesus Christ; Isa 26:19; Ezek 37:1-14; Dan 12:2; Luke 20:34-40; John 5:28-29; 11:23-26; Acts 23:6-8; Rom 8:18-25; 1 Cor 15:1-58; Phil 3:20-21; 1 Thess 4:13-18.

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¹³Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, 609.

¹⁴Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 65-66.

BIBLICAL ESCHATOLOGY

Personal Eschatology: Where Are the Dead?

Royce Dickinson, Jr.

1. Purgatory¹⁵

- “The scriptural passages that have been adduced (2 Mc 12:38-46; Mt 5:25-26; 12:31-32, and 1 Cor 3:11-15) do not as such establish the existence of purgatory. It can be validated in the light of divine justice and by the fact of Christians praying . . . and celebrating the Eucharist . . . for their dead.”¹⁶
- Questions raised by the concept of purgatory:
 - Are there opportunities for salvation *after* death?
 - Is the punishment of Hell *punitive* (condemnation) or *remedial* (cure)?
 - How *long* will Hell last?

2. Soul Sleep¹⁷

- Martin Luther: “We shall sleep until He comes and knocks on our little grave, saying: “Dr. Martin, get up!’ Then I shall rise up in a moment and shall be eternally merry with Him.”
- Logically, a monistic (that is, nondualistic) view of human nature leads to the conclusion of “soul sleep,” sometimes also referred to as “extinction—re-creation.” The human being as a whole is annihilated by death and is extinct. But at the future time of the general resurrection, God will re-create (bring back into existence) the very same human being who had previously existed (perhaps in an altered or glorified form).
- It is true that Paul often describes the state of the dead in terms of sleep (1 Thess 4:13; 1 Cor 15:16; etc.). However, sleep was a common term for death both in Hebrew and Greek literature and need not carry any theological significance.

¹⁵Michael Schmaus, *Katholische Dogmatik*, IV/2, 2nd ed. (Munich, 1941); Jacque Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, trans. A. Goldhammer (University of Chicago Press, 1984); and Zachary J. Hayes, “The Purgatorial View,” in William Crockett, ed., *Four Views on Hell* (Zondervan, 1992), 91-118.

¹⁶O’Collins and Farrugia, *Dictionary of Theology*, 217.

¹⁷Martin Luther (see the brief summary in Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 101-102); Bruce Reichenbach, *Is Man the Phoenix? A Study of Immortality* (Eerdmans, 1983 reprint of 1978 ed.); and Cullmann, *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?*

3. Immediate Resurrection¹⁸

- Although there is a variety of specific formulations that differ according to how each defines the term “resurrection” (receipt of a renewed body *or* transformation into a spiritual mode of existence *or* simple union with God), whatever the final resurrection amounts to it is said to occur for the individual at the instant of death. This might involve passing into another dimension of time beyond earthly time or it might mean transcending time altogether.¹⁹
- Problem: The New Testament depiction of a general resurrection of all people at a future time cannot be taken literally. At the least, it would seem that such a view diminishes the significance of the coming consummation.²⁰

4. Intermediate State²¹

- Consistent with “holistic dualism.”
- Jürgen Moltmann: “So there is after all an ‘intermediate time’ — the time between Christ’s resurrection and the general resurrection of the dead. . . . Christians know that they are safely hidden in Christ . . . the bearer or subject of hope for the peoples of the world; but they are not yet in the new world of the future. . . . The [Christian] dead are dead and not yet risen, but they are already ‘in Christ’ and are with him on the way to his future. . . . The [Christian] dead are not separated from God, nor are they sleeping; and they are not yet risen either. But they are ‘with Christ.’”

¹⁸R. H. Charles, *Eschatology: The Doctrine of a Future Life in Israel, Judaism and Christianity* (Black, 1899 / Schocken, 1963 [1913]); W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (Fortress Press, 1980), 285-320; Henry M. Shires, *The Eschatology of Paul* (Westminster 1966); Murray J. Harris, *Raised Immortal: Resurrection and Immortality in the New Testament* (Eerdmans, 1983); and Murray J. Harris, *From Grave to Glory: Resurrection in the New Testament (Including a Response to Norman L. Geisler)* (Academie/Zondervan, 1990).

¹⁹In “Church of Christ” language, this view is usually stated in terms that at death we “go straight to heaven.”

²⁰Some would circumvent this difficulty by means of an understanding of the nature of time that allows one at death to be instantly transported to the final consummation. Whether or not such a view of time is philosophically and logically defensible, involves exceedingly complex argumentation. See Gregory E. Ganssle, ed., *God & Time: Four Views* (InterVarsity Press, 2001).

²¹*The Heidelberg Catechism*, Answer 57 (1975 trans. of the Christian Reformed Church): “Not only my soul will be taken immediately after this life to Christ its head, but even my flesh, raised by the power of Christ, will be reunited with my soul and made like Christ’s glorious body.” This confession implies a period of time between death and the resurrection during which the soul exists with Christ apart from the body. See Philip E. Hughes, *Paul’s Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Eerdmans, 1962), 160ff; Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*; Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, 597-600; and Moltmann, *The Coming God*, 104-110.

- Jesus’ parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) and His assurance to the dying thief (Luke 23:43).
 - Luke 16:19-31—Jesus draws upon contemporary ideas about Hades to set forth the danger people face if they refuse to hear the word of God.
 - Luke 23:43—Promise to be in the presence of God.
 - Overall conclusion concerning Jesus’ teaching: Jesus gives no information about the state of the wicked dead, and He only affirms that the righteous dead are with God.
 - Paul’s two references to the “intermediate state”: Phil 1:21-24 and 2 Cor 5:1-10.
 - All Paul knows about the intermediate state is that it means to be “with Christ.” Phil 1:23 does not surpass what Jesus said to the dying thief (Luke 23:43).
 - The question of the intermediate state in Paul rests largely upon the interpretation of 2 Cor 5:1-10.
 - After the dissolution of this earthly, tentlike body, the believer will receive from God an eternal, heavenly body at the resurrection. What we desire is to put on the new body, not to be a naked, disembodied soul or spirit. We long for the resurrection body so that what is mortal may be swallowed up in life. Nevertheless, in spite of Paul’s natural abhorrence of being disembodied, he finds courage in the fact that to be away from the body—a disembodied spirit—means to be at home with the Lord.
 - However, “we have” suggests that we have this body at death, not a future resurrection. (Supports the view of “immediate resurrection.”) On the other hand, the present tense need not be pressed, but may be Paul’s way of simply expressing the complete certainty that we are to have it.²²
5. Key texts: Sheol/Hades; Eccles 12:7; Matt 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36; 16:19-31; 23:42-43; 2 Cor 5:1-10; Phil 1:21-24; 1 Pet 3:18-20; Rev 6:9-11; 20:5-6.

²²Floyd V. Filson, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, IB 10 (Abingdon, 1953), 326.

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**My Father Is Dead: A Reflection Based on
the Story of the Death of Lazarus (John 11)**

My father is dead. Jesus arrived too late. And so begins our conversation . . .

“Jesus, if you had been here, my father would not have died. Where were you when I needed you? Why didn’t you come sooner? Don’t you get it? If you had been here, *my father would not have died!* . . . But even now, I know that God will give you whatever you ask. So, fix it. Fix it *now!* What are you waiting for?”

“Your father will live again. Do you believe this?”

“Yea, yea . . . that’s what’s said at all the funerals to soothe the pain when nobody knows what else to say. Of course I believe he will live again. But that’s not what I want from you. I don’t want him to live “*again*”; I want him to live *now!* Don’t you get it?”

“I *am* the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even though he dies, will live. And the one who lives and believes in me will never die. Don’t *you* get it?”

“Wait a minute. You *are* the resurrection and the life? *Are?* – that means *here* and *now*. I don’t get it. . . . Jesus, why are you weeping? Is it anger because of the suffering caused by sin? Is it anguish for the pain you know I feel? Is it agitation because I am so slow to see? Jesus, why are you weeping?”

“I *am* weeping because I *am* the resurrection and the life. It is because of who and what I *am* that I weep. That’s how the resurrection and the life responds in the face of tragedy. Don’t you get it? When *your* father died, *my* father cried. . . .”

And then, I got it. In the tears that streamed down his face was a divine love that was as unending as it was unfathomable. Yes, I must wait for God’s tomorrow to become today. But while I wait, I do *not* have to wait to know that my father is alive. I know, in the here and now, that he lives. I do *not* have to wait to know that my father never for a single moment slipped from the grasp of God’s love. And, in all my anger and anguish, neither have I. My father is in good hands. And so am I.

Royce Dickinson, Jr. 11.29.2001

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BIBLICAL ESCHATOLOGY
Personal Eschatology: The Resurrection²³
Royce Dickinson, Jr.

1. The Old Testament²⁴

- Life and Death: For death *not* to be an occasion of scandal and for it *not* to appear as an unacceptable occurrence, three conditions had to be fulfilled—
 - Death had to come at the end of a long and rich existence (Gen 15:15; Job 42:17) and not prematurely, “in the middle of one’s days” (Ps 102:25; Isa 38:10).
 - The deceased had to leave behind descendants or at least a son (cf. the promises made to the patriarchs—Gen 15; 17; 18; the problem posed by a wife’s sterility—Gen 29-30; 1 Sam 1; the special mourning for the death of an only son—Amos 8:10; Jer 6:26; the establishment of levirate marriage—Gen 38; Deut 25:5-10).
 - Funeral rites, especially the burial of the corpse, had to be scrupulously observed (2 Sam 1:11-27; 3:31; Jer 16:1-9; Ezek 24:15-17 / woe to the one who was deprived of a sepulture—2 Kgs 9:16; Jer 8:1-3; Isa 14:19).
- Some Exceptions:
 - Enoch—Gen 5:24
 - Elijah—2 Kgs 2:1-15
- Resurrection–Healings:
 - 1 Kgs 17:17-24
 - 2 Kgs 4:31-37
 - 2 Kgs 13:20-21

²³As with most topics related to eschatology, the material on “the resurrection” is abundant. I (Royce) have only recently begun to read the massive work (817 pages!) of N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God, vol. 3 (Fortress Press, 2003); and the provocative essays in T. Peters, R. J. Russell, and M. Welker, eds., *Resurrection: Scientific and Theological Assessments* (Eerdmans, 2002). Richard N. Ostling of the Associated Press describes Wright’s book as “the most monumental defense of the Easter heritage in decades. . . . [It] confronts every major doubt about Easter, ancient and modern.” Peters, Russell, and Welker bring together such disciplines as physics, biology, neuro-science, philosophy, biblical studies, and theology on the subject of the resurrection.

²⁴This brief survey taken from Robert Martin-Achard, “Resurrection: Old Testament,” trans. Terrence Prendergast, in David Noel Freedman, ed., *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (Doubleday, 1992), 5:680-684).

- Resurrection–Restorations of the People of God:
 - Restoration of Israel–Hos 6:1-3
 - Restoration of Judah–Ezek 37:1-14
 - A Special Case–Isa 53:10-12
- Resurrection of the Dead:
 - Isa 26:19
 - Dan 12:1-3
- Conclusion:
 - The roots of faith in the resurrection are found in the proclamation of Yahweh’s power, a power which no force could hold in check; God masters death as God masters life (1 Sam 2:6; Deut 32:39; cf. Isa 25:8a). God has created and thus can re-create (2 Maccabees 7).
 - Belief in the resurrection of the dead is based on Yahweh’s power, on His justice, and on His love, as these have been revealed in the course of the history of Israel.

2. The New Testament²⁵

- The Sadducees rejected any idea of an afterlife (Acts 23:8; 26:8; Josephus *Antiquities* 18.14; *b. Sanhedrin* 90b).
- The Pharisees taught a resurrection and eternal reward for Israel in the age to come, excluding only apostates (Acts 23:6-8; *b. Sanhedrin* 90b; *b. Ketubot* 111b).
- The Teaching of Jesus:
 - “Like the angels in heaven” (Mark 12:18-27; Matt 22:23-33; Luke 20:27-38).
 - Threefold passion prediction (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34).
 - Jesus presumes His future resurrection (Mark 9:9; 12:10-11; 13:26; 14:25, 28, 62).
 - “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days” (Mark 14:58; 15:29; Matt 26:61; 27:40, 63; John 2:19-22).
 - The “sign of Jonah” (Matt 12:39-42; Luke 11:29-32).
 - Teaching on final reward and punishment assumes a resurrection—
 - Reversal of roles of rich and poor (Luke 14:7-14).

²⁵This brief survey taken from G. R. Osborne, “Resurrection,” in Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall, eds., *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (InterVarsity Press, 1992), 673-688; L. J. Kreitzer, “Resurrection” in Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (InterVarsity Press, 1993), 805-812; S. H. Travis, “Resurrection,” in Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, eds., *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments* (InterVarsity Press, 1997), 1015-1020; Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, 195-196, 341-342, 609-611.

- Rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31).
- Gospel of John (5:19-30; 6:40, 44, 54; 11:25-26; 14:2-3).
- Miracles of Raising the Dead:
 - Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:21-24, 35-43; Matt 9:18-19, 23-26; Luke 8:40-42, 49-56).
 - Widow's (of Nain) son (Luke 7:11-17; cf. similar raising of the widow's son by Elijah—1 Kgs 17:8-24).
 - Lazarus (John 11:1-44).
 - The Saints (Matt 27:51-53).
 - Dorcas (raised by Peter—Acts 9:36-43).
 - Eutychus (raised by Paul—Acts 20:7-12).
- Witness of All Four Gospels to Jesus' Resurrection: In Matthew and Mark the resurrection appearances center in Galilee, while in Luke and John the appearances center in Jerusalem.
- The Teaching of Paul:
 - Two general observations about the resurrection of Jesus Christ as it is portrayed in Paul's letters—
 - Paul never attempts to prove the historicity of the resurrection; he simply asserts it as a fact and seeks to draw out its implications for life and faith.
 - Paul nowhere describes the actual resurrection of Jesus Christ Himself, nor does he seek to provide an account of it simply as a historical event to be put alongside other events of history. The resurrection *is* historical, but it is also *more* than historical (it is an eschatological event referred to by some as “meta-historical”).
 - Images of the resurrection:
 - Two preliminary observations—(1) Paul does not proclaim a “resurrection of the flesh” but maintains a distinction between *sarx* (“flesh”) and *sōma* (“body”) in his teaching about the resurrection. (2) Paul draws upon a variety of different ideas in an effort to communicate the meaning of the resurrection, which he describes as “a mystery” (*mystērion*) in 1 Cor 15:51.
 - Eight images—
 - Resurrection as transformation (Phil 3:10, 20-21; 1 Cor 15:51-52; *present* transformation—2 Cor 3:18; Rom 6:1-11; 2 Cor 4:10-12; 5:15; 13:4; Gal 5:24-25; 6:14-45; Col 2:12; Eph 2:5-6).

- Resurrection as incorruption (1 Cor 15:42-50; 2 Tim 1:10; Rom 2:7; 1 Cor 9:25).
- Resurrection as immortality (1 Cor 15:53b-54; cf. Isa 25:8).
- Resurrection and exaltation (Rom 1:3-4; Phil 2:9-11; Rom 8:34; Eph 1:20; 2:6; Col 3:1; 1 Tim 3:16; 1 Thess 4:16-17).
- Resurrection and glorification (1 Thess 2:12; 2 Thess 2:14; Rom 5:2; 2 Cor 4:17; Rom 8:11-17; 2 Cor 4:10-18; Rom 8:30; Col 1:27; 3:1, 4).
- Resurrection and eternal life (Gal 6:8; Rom 5:21; 6:22-23; 1 Tim 1:16; 6:12; Titus 1:2; 3:7; Rom 2:7).
- Resurrection and conformity to the Image of Christ (Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 3:18; Col 3:10; 1 Cor 15:49).
- Resurrection and redemption of the body (1 Cor 15:35-49; Rom 8:23; Phil 3:20-21; Rom 3:24; 1 Cor 1:30; Eph 1:7, 14; 4:30; Col 1:14).
- Co-crucifixion and co-resurrection in Christ:
 - Image of baptism (Rom 6:3-4, 8; Gal 3:27; Col 2:12).
 - Other images (Col 3:1; Phil 3:10-11; 2 Cor 4:10).
- Some issues of interpretation:
 - Question: Does the resurrection of Jesus *prove* the messiahship of Jesus? Answer: Not necessarily.²⁶
 - Question: Does the empty tomb *prove* the resurrection? Answer: No.²⁷
 - Question: Does Paul teach a general resurrection for *all* people? Answer: Not explicitly.
- The Sermons in the Book of Acts: The resurrection of Jesus was an indispensable part of the preached gospel.²⁸
- Hebrews: Resurrection and Exaltation (6:2; 11:19, 35; 9:11-12; 13:20-21—Christ’s exaltation to God’s right hand presupposes His resurrection from the dead).
- 1 Peter: Hope of Vindication (1:3, 21; 3:15, 18-22).
- Revelation: “I was dead and am alive for ever” (1:5, 18; 2:8; 5:3-5; 6:9-11; 20:4-6, 11-15; 21:5-6).

²⁶Jewish scholar Pinchas Lapide accepts the historicity of Jesus’ bodily resurrection but does not describe himself as a Christian (that is, as one who affirms Jesus as Messiah). For Lapide, the resurrection of Jesus is part of God’s preparatory work, making the world ready for the future revelation of the Messiah. See Pinchas Lapide, *The Resurrection of Jesus: A Jewish Perspective* (Augsburg, 1983).

²⁷“Faith . . . would be destroyed by the discovery of the dead body of Jesus, but it cannot be created simply by the discovery of an empty tomb” (C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Harper’s New Testament Commentaries (Harper & Row, 1968), 349).

²⁸See C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (1936; reprint: Baker, 1980).

3. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

- “The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is foundational to the Christian faith. It is referred to explicitly in seventeen books of the New Testament and is implicit in most of the remaining ten.”²⁹
- “Christianity stand or falls with the reality of the raising of Jesus from the dead by God.”³⁰
 - A *contradictory* event: The cross and the resurrection represent a complete contradiction, represent total opposites—death and life, the absence of God and the nearness of God, godforsakenness and the glory of God. Jesus abandoned by His Father to death and Jesus raised by His father to life, yet it is the *same* Jesus. An essential element in the resurrection appearances is Jesus’ identification of Himself as Jesus, the same Jesus who died. By raising Him to life, God created continuity amidst discontinuity. We could call this a *dialectical* Christology, in which Jesus’ identity is sustained in contradiction.
 - An *eschatological* event: God’s act of raising Jesus from the dead was the culminating event of eschatological promise. In the resurrection, God *guaranteed* His promise by *enacting* it in Jesus’ person. The combination of a dialectical Christology and an eschatological event results in seeing the resurrection of Jesus as a *dialectical eschatological promise*: just as the resurrection contradicts the cross so the promise contradicts reality. Jesus’ resurrection is God’s promise of new creation for the whole of godforsaken reality that the crucified Jesus represents. Furthermore, just as it is the same Jesus who was crucified and raised, so God’s promise is not for *another* world, but for a radically new future *for this world*.
 - A *hopeful* event: Hope for the future of the world, given in the resurrection of Jesus, entailed and entails a call to universal mission for the church. Christian hope is not for *another world*, but for *the divine transformation of this world*. Christianity at its most authentic has always been radical hope.

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²⁹Kreitzer, “Resurrection,” 805-806.

³⁰Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*, trans. J. W. Leitch (SCM Press, 1967), 165. The sub-points that follow are taken from Moltmann’s *Theology of Hope* as succinctly summarized by Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann* (T&T Clark, 1995), 29-46. Concerning the central role of Christ for Christianity, see the classic work of W. H. Griffith Thomas, *Christianity Is Christ: The Foundation of Our Faith* (Moody Press, 1965).

BIBLICAL ESCHATOLOGY
Personal Eschatology: The Judgment³¹
Royce Dickinson, Jr.

1. The Teaching of Jesus:

- It is impossible to construct an eschatological scheme from Jesus' teaching. He is concerned with the *certainty* of the future and the *bearing of the future on the present*, not with apocalyptic timetables and calendars.
- The only extended passage that deals with judgment is the parable of Matt 25:31-46.
 - This is not didactic eschatology but a dramatic parable.
 - The basis of judgment will be the way we have treated Jesus' "brothers" (v. 40).
 - Who are the "brothers"? They are the disciples of Jesus³² (Matt 12:50; cf. 10:8-11, 14-15, 17-18, 40 where Jesus prepares his followers as to how they can expect to be treated and teaches that the destiny of the nations will be determined by the way they respond to Jesus' representatives).
 - This is not a program of eschatology but a practical parable of human destiny.
- Gospel of John—
 - The "now already"—realized eschatology—and the "not yet"—unrealized eschatology (3:18, 19; 12:48).
 - Those who believe in Jesus have in a sense passed beyond judgment; it is as though they were already on the other side of judgment, having passed from death into life (5:24).
 - The final judgment will in reality be the execution of the decree of judgment that has already been passed (somewhat similar in our legal system to the judge's sentencing when, after a period of time, it follows the verdict).

³¹This brief survey taken from S. H. Travis, "Judgment," in Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall, eds., *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (InterVarsity Press, 1992), 408-411; S. H. Travis, "Judgment," in Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (InterVarsity Press, 1993), 516-517; M. A. Seifrid, "Judgment," in Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, eds., *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments* (InterVarsity Press, 1997), 621-625; Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, 206-207, 343-344, 611-612.

³²See T. W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus* (Eerdmans, 1957), 248-252.

2. The Teaching of Paul:

- While Paul refers frequently to judgment, he nowhere develops this doctrine as he does the resurrection.
- The most developed Pauline passage on judgment is Rom 2.

3. Overall conclusion: The *fact* of judgment is certain, but the *nature* of judgment is not clearly defined.

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BIBLICAL ESCHATOLOGY
Historical Eschatology: The Parousia³³ (Second Coming)
Royce Dickinson, Jr.

1. The “problem” of its delay.³⁴
 - Old Testament background of “the day of the Lord.”
 - The false assumptions of those who say Christ is not coming (2 Pet 3:1-13—“Where is the promise of his coming?”) and those who say Christ has already come (2 Tim 2:17-18—“The resurrection has already taken place!”).³⁵
 - Olivet Discourse (Mark 13:1-37; Matt 24:1-51; Luke 21:5-36).³⁶

³³This brief survey taken from L. J. Kreitzer, “Eschatology,” in Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (InterVarsity Press, 1993), 253-269; L. J. Kreitzer, “Parousia,” in Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, eds., *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments* (InterVarsity Press, 1997), 856-875—excellent bibliography; Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, 196-205, 339-340, 600-603.

³⁴Not surprisingly, this is a much-debated “problem.” For me (Royce), I tend to agree with the conclusion of David Aune: “The very paucity of references to a supposed delay of the eschaton is indicative of the fact that the delay of the Parousia was largely a non-problem within early Christianity” (David E. Aune, “The Significance of the Delay of the Parousia for Early Christianity,” in Gerald F. Hawthorne, ed., *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation* (Eerdmans, 1975), 87-109 (quote taken from page 103)). Furthermore, passages in the New Testament that stress the imminence of the Parousia may be much more concerned with the *theological* relationship between the present reality and future hope than they are with the *chronological* relationship between them. Once this crucial point is recognized, the “problem” of the delay of the Parousia diminishes greatly in significance (see Stephen S. Smalley, “The Delay of the Parousia,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 83 (March 1964): 41-54; and Stephen H. Travis, *I Believe in the Second Coming of Jesus* (Eerdmans, 1982)). For an overall perspective that I (Royce) have found to be quite helpful, see C. E. B. Cranfield, “Thoughts on New Testament Eschatology,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 35 (December 1982): 497-512. Cranfield writes: “I have argued . . . that the affirmation of the nearness of the end . . . is not the same thing as an affirmation that it must necessarily occur within at the most a few decades . . . but is rather the expression of the recognition that history’s most significant events have already taken place in the ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, so that all that remains between his ascension and his parousia can only be a sort of epilogue, during the whole of which, whether the actual length of time involved is short or long, the end presses upon the life and concerns of the believer as something urgently relevant to the present. . . . Nothing of independent significance lies ahead of mankind now except the Parousia itself and God’s coming order” (504-505).

³⁵For an example of over-realized eschatology (the Parousia has already occurred) within the Churches of Christ, see Max R. King, *The Spirit of Prophecy* (Max R. King, 1971). King’s view is sometimes referred to as “the A.D. 70 theory” since he advocates that at the Fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 the events associated with the Parousia also took place.

³⁶There is no shortage of material on the Olivet Discourse. For a comprehensive treatment of the issues involved and the interpretations offered, see George R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Last Days: The Interpretation of the Olivet Discourse* (Hendrickson, 1993). Among the most helpful expositions for me (Royce), see C. E. B. Cranfield, “St. Mark 13,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 6 (1953): 189-196, 287-303; 7 (1954): 284-303; and D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, EBC 8 (Zondervan, 1984), 488-511.

- Far from being signs by which the coming of the end can be calculated, these are signs that *the end is delayed*. “The end is not yet” (Mark 13:7; Matt 24:6; Luke 21:9).
- The parables of the persistent widow (Luke 18:1-8), the delay of the bridegroom (Matt 25:1-13), and the wealthy man who returns to settle accounts after a long time (Matt 25:14-30) emphasize *both* imminence and delay, thereby indicating the need for persistent steadfastness and perpetual readiness.
- Jesus flatly affirmed that He did not when He would return (Mark 13:32; Matt 24:36).
- Paul uses three terms to describe the Second Coming:
 - *parousía* — “presence,” “arrival”
 - *apokálypsis* — “unveiling,” “disclosure”
 - *epipháneia* — “appearing”

2. Parousia: the end of history (termination) or history’s end (destination)?³⁷

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³⁷Does history’s goal lie within history? The answer to this question has significant implications for understanding the nature and necessity of the millennium.

BIBLICAL ESCHATOLOGY
Historical Eschatology: The Millennium³⁸
Royce Dickinson, Jr.

1. General Definitions:

- Amillennialism—The thousand years of Rev 20 do not represent a specific period of time between Christ’s first and second comings. Instead, the millennium refers to the heavenly reign of Christ and the departed saints during the Church Age. The return of Christ will occur at the end of history and the church presently lives in the final era of history.
- Postmillennialism—Christ’s second coming will *follow* the millennium; His return then is *postmillennial*. The millennium that precedes Christ’s return will come by the spiritual and moral influence of Christian preaching and teaching in the world, resulting in an ever-increasing converted world. The return of Christ will be the climax of history’s progress toward a utopian world.
- Premillennialism—Christ’s second coming will *precede* the millennium; His return then is *premillennial*. The millennium will begin supernaturally and cataclysmically, preceded by various signs. Following these signified events, Christ will return and reign on the earth with His saints for one thousand years. After the millennium (at the end of which God will crush evil forever), the nonbelieving dead will be raised and judged, and heaven and hell will be established.

³⁸The discussion of this subject is as varied as it is voluminous. Brief introductions to the subject are Richard Bauckham, “Millennium,” in S. B. Ferguson and D. F. Wright, eds., *New Dictionary of Theology* (InterVarsity Press, 1988), 428-430; and B. J. Dodd, “Millennium,” in Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, eds., *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments* (InterVarsity Press, 1997), 738-741. If I (Royce) could recommend only one work on the Book of Revelation, it would be Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, New Testament Theology (Cambridge University Press, 1993). For a practical “how to” guide, see J. Ramsey Michaels, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation*, Guides to New Testament Exegesis (Baker, 1992). For an overview of the general interpretations of the millennium in which the writers interact with each other, see Robert G. Clouse, ed., *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views* (InterVarsity Press, 1977)—contributors are George Eldon Ladd, “Historic Premillennialism”; Herman A. Hoyt, “Dispensational Premillennialism”; Loraine Boettner, “Postmillennialism”; Anthony A. Hoekema, “Amillennialism.” Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, 129-235, provides an extensive discussion of millenarianism, interpreting it in Christian and Western history and distinguishing between “eschatological millenarianism” and “historical millenarianism.” For a comprehensive yet cordial critique of Moltmann’s discussion, see Richard Bauckham, “The Millennium,” in Bauckham, ed., *God Will Be All in All*, 123-147.

2. New Testament References to the Millennium:

- 2 Peter 3:8—
 - An implicit reference to the millennium?
 - An echo of the eschatology of Revelation or of the perspective of Ps 90:4?
 - It seems likely that the emphasis is not on a human perception or symbol of the length of Christ's intermediate reign (as in Rev 20) but on how the vast human time line appears so brief to God (as in Ps 90:4).
- 1 Corinthians 15:23-26—
 - Two distinct stages; therefore, no interim messianic kingdom (no millennium) —(1) Jesus' resurrection ("first fruits"); (2) Jesus' parousia ("his coming") which brings "the end."
 - Three distinct stages; therefore, an interim messianic kingdom (a millennium) —(1) Jesus' resurrection ("first fruits"); (2) Jesus' parousia ("his coming"); (3) "Then comes the end." An undefined interval falls between Christ's resurrection and His parousia (the time in which we now live); and another undefined interval falls between Christ's parousia and "the end."
 - Both interpretations are plausible; and so, one will likely prefer the interpretation that is consistent with their overall belief regarding the millennium.
 - Two other difficult Pauline issues connected with the coming of Christ and the consummation: (1) the mystery of lawlessness (2 Thess 2:1-12), and (2) the mystery of Israel's hardening and final salvation (Rom 9-11).
- Revelation 20:4-6—
 - The only explicit reference in the New Testament to a temporary, thousand-year reign of Christ. Regardless of the *form* of the millennium, its *function* is clear: to reward the servants of God who remain faithful through the trials of their faith. "John expected the martyrs to be vindicated, but the millennium depicts the meaning, rather than predicting the manner of their vindication."³⁹
 - Are the seven scenes of 19:11-22:5⁴⁰ sequential?
 - Yes, there is a chronological progression of end-time events. Therefore, there will be an interim messianic kingdom (millennium) between the parousia and the "the end."

³⁹Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 108.

⁴⁰(1) 19:11-16—The Victorious Warrior: Christ; (2) 19:17-21—The Last Battle; (3) 20:1-3—Satan Is Bound; (4) 20:4-6—The Millennium; (5) 20:7-10—Satan Is Defeated; (6) 20:11-15—The Last Judgment; (7) 21:1-22:5—The New Jerusalem.

- No, there is no chronological progression of end-time events. Therefore, there will be no interim messianic kingdom (no millennium) between the parousia and the “the end.” “Here is no calendarization of the End, but a tour through an eschatological art gallery in which the theme of God’s victory at the end of history is treated in seven different pictures, each complete in itself with its own message and with little concern for chronology.”⁴¹
- Both interpretations are plausible; and so, one will likely prefer the interpretation that is consistent with their overall belief regarding the millennium.⁴²

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⁴¹M. Eugene Boring, *Revelation*, Interpretation (John Knox Press, 1989), 195.

⁴²Elsewhere, I (Royce) have maintained: “In the Book of Revelation, beginning with verse 11 of chapter 19 and running to verse 5 of chapter 22, the Apostle John reveals seven visions of the End. Notice that John does not number these visions, thereby avoiding the false notion that he is giving a strictly chronological progression of end-time events. What we should see is not an apocalyptic calendar of events; rather, what we should see is an apocalyptic kaleidoscope through which we view the End in its awfulness and in its awesomeness” (Royce Dickinson, Jr., “The Victorious Christ” (a sermon preached 26 May 2002, Church of Christ, Plymouth, Michigan)). Although I am still in agreement with myself (!), I must confess that an implied sequential chronology cannot be conclusively disproved. Concerning an interim messianic kingdom, my own understanding is therefore tentative: it seems that the language of both Paul (1 Cor 15) and John (Rev 20) does not explicitly assert an interim millennium, but their language does seem to implicitly assume the possibility of an interim millennium.

BIBLICAL ESCHATOLOGY

Cosmic Eschatology

Royce Dickinson, Jr.

1. Creation: Annihilation or Consummation?

- Many apocalyptic Jewish interpreters developed in detail the anticipation of the new heavens and new earth introduced in Isa 56-66. Although the emphases of their developments varied (for example, the restoration of Israel in *Jub.* 4:26 and *1 En.* 45:4-5; the transformation of the righteous in a final resurrection in *2 Bar.* 51:1-16; the liberation of the natural world in *1 En.* 51:4-5; and the return of the creation to its original state of goodness in *2 Bar.* 73-74), the persistent conviction of the apocalyptic perspective is that the new age to come will be decidedly different from—and qualitatively better than—the present evil age.⁴³
- The prophets constantly described the establishment of God’s Kingdom in terms of a redeemed world (Isa 11:6-9; 65:17-25), and the New Testament shares the same theology. “Creation is never viewed as something evil that must be escaped. The human being as body is a creature of God. Humans are not sinful because they are creatures but because they have rebelled against God. In the final consummation, the whole person and the world of which he or she is a part will be delivered from the curse of evil.”⁴⁴
- The redemption of the natural world from evil and decay is the corollary of the redemption of the body (Rom 8:19-23).
- Key New Testament Texts:
 - Romans 8:19-23⁴⁵—
 - Creation, helplessly enslaved to the decay that rules this world after the Fall (and therefore unable to fulfill the purpose of its existence), exists in the hope that it will be set free to participate in the eschatological glory to be enjoyed by the children of God.

⁴³J. R. Levison, “Creation and New Creation” in Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (InterVarsity Press, 1993), 189-190.

⁴⁴Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, 613.

⁴⁵C. E. B. Cranfield, “Some Observations on Romans 8:19-21,” in R. Banks, ed., *Reconciliation and Hope: New Testament Essays on Atonement and Eschatology Presented to L. L. Morris* (Eerdmans, 1974), 224-230 (reprinted in C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Bible and Christian Life* (T. & T. Clark, 1985), 94-104); C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans: Volume 1 (I-VIII)*, ICC (T. & T. Clark, 1975), 408-419; and Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Eerdmans, 1996), 506-537.

- “Being set free” strongly suggests that the ultimate destiny of creation is not annihilation but transformation.
- 2 Peter 3:1-13⁴⁶—
 - “We must bear in mind that 2 Peter 3 speaks of three ‘worlds,’ each consisting of heaven and earth: a world before the flood, called ‘the world that then existed’ (3:6), the present world between the flood and the Day of the Lord, called ‘the heavens and earth that now exist’ (3:7), and a future world after the Day, called the ‘new heavens and new earth’ (3:13). The three worlds (which are really the same world in three periods of its history) are marked off from each other by two cosmic crises: judgement by water in the flood, and the judgement by fire on the Day. In speaking of the future world judgement, the apostle is explicitly drawing a parallel with the earlier world judgement. Just as the former world ‘was destroyed’ (*apōleto*, 3:6), so the present world is facing the day of ‘destruction’ (*apōleia*, 3:7). However, just as the ‘destruction’ wrought by the water did not cause the world to vanish (it continues to be preserved ‘by the same word’ [3:7]), so the ‘destruction’ which will be wrought by the fire will presumably not cause the world to vanish either. Just as the second world is the first one washed clean by water, so the third world will be the second one even more radically purged by fire.”⁴⁷
 - The association of the Day of the Lord with the image of heating-to-the-melting-point provides a clue for the Old Testament background of Peter’s eschatological imagery: Mal 3:2-4. For Peter, it is the entire cosmos and not just the Israelite priesthood that is to be refined in the crucible of judgment on the great Day of the Lord. In apocalyptic fashion the imagery is given a cosmic application, for a renewed and purified heaven and earth is the result of the refining process.
- Revelation 21:1-5a—
 - “The consummation of creation is something *new* over against creation-in-the-beginning. . . . And yet what takes the place of heaven and earth is not something quite different. On the contrary, the new creation presupposes

⁴⁶Al Wolters, “Worldview and Textual Criticism in 2 Peter 3:10,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 49 (Fall 1987): 405-413. For a thorough discussion of this problematic Petrine text, see Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, WBC 50 (Word, 1983), 282-335. Wolters and Bauckham differ in some of their conclusions, but reading them both gives one a comprehensive understanding of the key interpretative issues. My (Royce) notes agree with Wolters.

⁴⁷Wolters, “Worldview and Textual Criticism in 2 Peter 3:10,” 408.

the old one; it is the *new* creation of all things. ‘Behold, I make all things new’ (21.5) means that nothing passes away or is lost, but that everything is brought back again in new form. The *creatio ex nihilo*, the creation out of nothing, is completed in the eschatological *creatio ex vetere*, the creation out of the old.”⁴⁸

- “The final state of the Kingdom of God is a new heaven and a new earth (21:1ff.). This expresses a theology of creation that runs throughout the Bible. The Old Testament prophets picture the Kingdom of God in terms of a redeemed earth (Isa. 11:6-9; Joel 3:18; Amos 9:13-15). This is described in terms of a new heaven and a new earth even in the Old Testament (Isa. 65:17; 66:22). However, this picture of a new order is less than perfect in the Old Testament, for Isaiah still speaks of sin and death in the new earth (Isa. 65:20). However, a fundamental theology underlies these expectations, even though they must be clarified by progressive revelation: that humanity’s ultimate destiny is an earthly one. Human beings are creatures, and God created the earth to be the scene of their creaturely existence. Therefore, even as the redemption of people in the bodily aspect of their being demands the resurrection of the body, so the redemption of the very physical creation requires a renewed earth as the scene of their perfected existence. Humanity never ceases to be God’s creature. The New Testament does not outstrip this theology, although it reveals more than the Old Testament does by showing that the newness of the eternal order is much more radical than God had disclosed to the prophets. Jesus spoke of the regeneration of the world (Mt. 19:28), and Paul spoke of the redemption of the created order (Rom. 8:20-21). The new earth of Revelation 21 is the final term in the revelation of how this redemption is to take place. Just as we can speak of the resurrection of the body even though the resurrection body will be very different from the physical bodies of this order, so we can speak of the redemption of the creation even though the new order is indeed a new earth.”⁴⁹

2. Heaven

- See the discussion above concerning “a new heaven and a new earth.”

⁴⁸Moltmann, *The Coming God*, 265.

⁴⁹Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, 681-682.

- The “new Jerusalem” (Rev 21:1-22:5):⁵⁰
 - *The New Jerusalem as place.* As a *place*, the New Jerusalem is at once paradise, holy city, and temple. As paradise, it is the natural world in its ideal state; as holy city, it fulfills the ideal of the ancient city; and as temple, it is the place of God’s immediate presence, where His worshippers see His face. The New Jerusalem includes paradise in the form of the water of life, the tree of life, and—in accordance with Jewish traditions—it is built out of the precious stones and metals of paradise. As a city, the New Jerusalem is the seat of the divine kingdom. The throne that had been in heaven is now in the New Jerusalem. But this city needs no temple, because the whole city is filled with God’s presence. As a result, the city itself becomes a temple. Its perfectly cubic shape makes it like no city ever imagined, but it is like the holy of holies in the temple.
 - *The New Jerusalem as people.* As a *people*, the words of 21:3 echo both (1) God’s promise to dwell with His own people Israel and to be their God, and (2) His promise that many nations will also be His people with whom He will dwell in Zion. John combines the language of God’s commitment to His covenant people with the most universalistic reference to all people.
 - *The New Jerusalem as divine presence.* As *divine presence*, God’s creation reaches its final fulfillment when it becomes the scene of God’s immediate presence. This is what is “new” about the new creation: it is the old creation filled with God’s presence. Before chapter 21, Revelation confines the presence of God, as “the One who sits on the throne,” to heaven, where His throne is. Only when all evil has been destroyed and His kingdom comes in its entirety, will God’s throne be on earth. Then, when the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven, God will make His home with humanity on earth. In chapters 4 and 5, in heaven, the living creatures form an inner circle of priests in the immediate presence of God, and the twenty-four elders form an inner circle of thrones sharing God’s rule. They mediate the worship of the rest of creation. In chapter 22, however, all who may enter the New Jerusalem have immediate access to God’s throne on earth. They are priests who worship Him and kings who reign with Him.

⁵⁰The following material is taken from Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 126-143. The description of the New Jerusalem is a remarkable weaving together of many strands of Old Testament tradition into a marvelous picture of a place in which people live in the immediate presence of God.

3. Hell⁵¹

- Purgatory⁵²
 - “The scriptural passages that have been adduced (2 Mc 12:38-46; Mt 5:25-26; 12:31-32, and 1 Cor 3:11-15) do not as such establish the existence of purgatory. It can be validated in the light of divine justice and by the fact of Christians praying . . . and celebrating the Eucharist . . . for their dead.”⁵³
 - Questions raised by the concept of purgatory:
 - Are there opportunities for salvation *after* death?
 - Is the punishment of Hell *punitive* (condemnation) or *remedial* (cure)?
 - How *long* will Hell last?
- Eternal Punishing (Traditional View)
 - Presupposes innate immortality.⁵⁴
 - Everlasting, conscious torment.
- Eternal Punishment (Conditional View)
 - Presupposes conditional immortality.⁵⁴
 - Annihilation, the consequences are everlasting.

⁵¹For an overview of the schools of thought regarding Hell in which the writers interact with each other, see William Crockett, ed., *Four Views on Hell* (Zondervan, 1992). John F. Walvoord advocates “The Literal View” of Hell as a place of smoke and flames, whereas William V. Crockett defends “The Metaphorical View” in which the language of smoke and flames is not seen as a literal fire. Both Walvoord and Crockett view Hell as a place of eternal conscious punishment. Clark H. Pinnock articulates “The Conditional View” in which since human beings possess conditional mortality, God eventually destroys the souls of the wicked rather than punishing them endlessly. Zachary J. Hayes explains the thinking that undergirds “The Purgatorial View” of Hell. Although four views are presented, there are actually only three general schools of thought: purgatory, eternal punishing (eternal conscious punishing), and eternal punishment (annihilation the consequences of which are eternal). The doctrine of universalism—the eventual salvation of all human beings—has some affinity with the purgatorial view in that whatever form of judgment takes place, such judgment has a curative effect so that all are saved. Within evangelicalism, the major point of debate is between those who believe that the wicked will experience perpetual, conscious torment after death (eternal punishing) *and* those who believe that the wicked will experience a limited period of conscious punishment and then they will cease to exist (eternal punishment). For an evangelical discussion between the traditional view and the conditional view, see Edward William Fudge and Robert A. Peterson, *Two Views of Hell: A Biblical & Theological Dialogue* (InterVarsity Press, 2000)—Fudge (his larger work is *The Fire That Consumes: The Biblical Case for Conditional Immortality*, 2d rev. ed. (Paternoster, 1994)) argues the case for the conditional view (eternal punishment) and Peterson (his larger work is *Hell on Trial: The Case for Eternal Punishment* (Presbyterian & Reformed, 1995)) argues the case for the traditional view (eternal punishing).

⁵²See p. 6 above.

⁵³O’Collins and Farrugia, *Dictionary of Theology*, 217.

⁵⁴As I (Royce) emphasized at the beginning of this study of eschatology, one’s conclusion as to “the nature of our being” (pp. 3-5 above) has significant implications for one’s conclusion as to the ultimate destiny of our being.

- Universalism⁵⁵
 - “*Apokatastasis panton*”⁵⁶ (“the restoration of all things”), “restorationism,” “universalism,” “universal salvation” are all terms for one of the most disputed questions in Christian eschatology.
 - Origen (A.D. 185-254) wanted to see even the Devil ultimately redeemed; but he was unable to prevail. His doctrine was condemned in the patristic church at the emperor’s command.⁵⁷ Augustine (A.D. 354-430) won the day with his idea that out of all the lost only a limited number of the elect would be redeemed.
 - Texts used to support universalism:
 - Eph 1:10—“to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth.”
 - Col 1:20—“to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of the cross.”
 - Phil 2:10-11—“that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
 - 1 Cor 15:28—God will be “all in all.”
 - Christ died for “all”—Rom 5:18; 1 Cor 15:22; Rom 11:32.
 - Christ’s Descent into Hell: “The Christian doctrine about the restoration of all things denies neither damnation nor hell. On the contrary: it assumes that in his suffering and dying Christ suffered the true and total hell of God-forsakenness for the reconciliation of the world, and experienced for us the true and total damnation of sin. . . . *The true Christian foundation for the hope of universal salvation is the theology of the cross, and the realistic consequence of the theology of the cross can only be the restoration of all things.*”⁵⁸ Key texts: Mark 15:34; Acts 2:24; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13; 1 Cor 15:54-57.

⁵⁵For a concise and cogent presentation of the case for universalism, see Moltmann, *The Coming God*, 235-255. The fact that I (Royce) allot so much space in my notes to this topic does *not* indicate support for universalism. Since universalism represents a challenge to *all* three general views of Hell (even the purgatorial view reserves Hell for devils and unrepentant sinners), I wanted to adequately discuss it.

⁵⁶This Greek expression is used in the New Testament only in Acts 3:21, where it denotes the fulfillment of God’s promises, but not universal salvation. However, the terminology of “the restoration of all things,” “universal restoration,” or “restorationism” is used in theological discussions to mean universal salvation.

⁵⁷The Fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (A.D. 553) confirmed the edict of the Emperor Justinian.

⁵⁸Moltmann, *The Coming God*, 251.

- Does Hell have an exit door? Eph 4:8-10; 1 Pet 3:18-20
- The paradox of divine sovereignty and human free-will. Whose will prevails in the end?

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BIBLICAL ESCHATOLOGY

Conclusion

Royce Dickinson, Jr.

1. Divine Eschatology: What does God get from the world?⁵⁹
2. Eschatology: so what? What difference does it make?⁶⁰
 - Eschatology & epistemology: living by faith.
 - Eschatology & ethics: living and loving.
 - Eschatology: living in hope.

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⁵⁹See Ibid., 323-339, where Moltmann surveys the solutions that have been suggested. For me (Royce), much of this remains a great mystery.

⁶⁰I (Royce) am currently reading two works from which I expect to offer some insights: John Polkinghorne, *The God of Hope and the End of the World* (Yale University Press, 2002); and Richard Bauckham and Trevor Hart, *Hope against Hope: Christian Eschatology at the Turn of the Millennium* (Eerdmans, 1999).