

5. **Immortality:** Refers to the human soul and applies to those that possess Eternal Life whose eternal destiny is in heaven and to those who possess Forever Life whose eternal destiny is in the lake of fire.

7. The Doctrine of Eternal Life

A. Definition:

John 3:36 - "He who believes [πιστεύω (*pisteúō*): placing one's faith alone in Christ alone] in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see eternal life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

1. The verb *pisteúō* is in the present tense indicating that salvation occurs at the moment someone believes in Christ for salvation.
2. At that moment, the person possesses thirty-nine irrevocable absolutes plus the revocable absolute of the filling of the Holy Spirit.
3. At salvation the believer receives the indwelling and filling of the Holy Spirit Who provides a human spirit to which He imputes Eternal Life.

1 John 2:28 - Now as for you, the anointing [the indwelling and filling ministries of the Holy Spirit] that you received from Him [Jesus Christ: doctrine of procession], resides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you. But as His anointing [of the Holy Spirit] teaches you about all things [see 1 Corinthians 2], it is true and not a lie. Just as it [the anointing] has taught you, you abide in Him. (NET)

4. One's attitude toward Christ determines whether he has Eternal Life or not.

B. Three Environments of Eternal Life

1. All believers have Eternal Life beginning at salvation and it continues as long as Human or Temporal Life is viable. This is called "Mortality" by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:53-54.

2. The believer has Eternal Life after physical death while living in heaven in an interim body. The body resides in Interim Life while the soul continues to possess Eternal Life.
3. At the resurrection, the believer has Resurrection Life in the body while Eternal Life continues in the soul. Paul refers to this as “Immortality” in 1 Corinthians 15:53–54.
4. Believers who are alive at the moment of the Rapture only have two environments for Eternal Life, Human or Temporal and Resurrection.

C. There is a body for each stage of Eternal Life

1. During Human Life the believer lives in a body of corruption with a sin nature while his human spirit possesses Eternal Life.
2. After physical death, the interim body appears and functions in many ways as does the temporal body. For example:

2 Corinthians 5:8 - ... we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

3. The interim body is evident in the Greek of this verse and is found in the phrase, **πρὸς τὸν κύριον (prós tón kúrion)**: “with the Lord.”
4. The preposition, *prós*, is an accusative of measure which refers to the extent of time indicated by context. This preposition is defined as follows:

πρὸς (prós). With the accusative marking the object toward or to which something moves or is directed. After verbs implying motion to a place and also a subsequent remaining there. After verbs implying direction in close proximity, “to see something face to face.”²¹

²¹ Spiros Zodhiates, gen ed., *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, rev. ed. (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1993), 1225.

5. The doctrine Paul refers to is being “absent from the body” which for him would be physical death in Interim Body or the Rapture in Resurrection Body. Either way he would be in the presence of the Lord, i.e., “face to face” with Him.

D. Among Homo sapiens, Eternal Life Belongs only to Believers.

1. Eternal Life begins for a believer at salvation and continues until physical death. The soul and human spirit remain in Interim Body, the latter containing Eternal Life. Likewise for the Resurrection Body.
2. All angels, elect and fallen have Eternal Life by nature of their creation. Eternal Life is eternal. However, fallen angels will spend eternity in the lake of fire; elect angels in heaven functioning under the authority of Jesus Christ.
3. At the Rapture the mortal puts on Immortality with Eternal Life in an immortal body.
4. It is in the status of Eternal Life that we have courage and confidence to train in the combat of the Invisible War:

1 Timothy 6:12 - Fight the good fight of faith. Take an interest in eternal life to which you were called and you made a good confession in the in the presence of many witnesses.

1 John 5:11 - This is the deposition: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has eternal life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have eternal life. (EXT)

Jude 21 - Guard yourselves by means of the love of God, as you wait for the unfailing love of our Lord Jesus Christ with reference to eternal life. (EXT)

5. The mortality of the unbeliever is in the status of spiritual death and the immortality of the unbeliever is called the “second death” in:

Revelation 20:12 - And I saw the dead [unbelievers], the great and the small [human-good accomplishments], standing before the throne [Great White], and books [Books of Works] were opened; and another book of a different kind was opened, which is the Book of Life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written into the books according to their works.

Revelation 20:14 - Then death [physical death of unbelievers] even Hades [former residents of Torments] were thrown into the lake of fire. This [sentence] is the second death, the lake of fire. (EXT)

E. There are two general resurrections.

1. The First Resurrection has to do with believers only and in part of those that have placed their faith in Christ for salvation and Eternal Life.
2. The First Resurrection is pictured as a battalion pass-in-review divided into four echelons derived from 1 Corinthians 15:20-24:
 - (1) **Alpha Company:** the resurrection of Jesus Christ at the end of His victory in the great power experiment of the Hypostatic Union (Matthew 28: 1-15; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-49; John 20:1-23; and Acts 2:31-35).
 - (2) **Bravo Company:** the resurrection of the royal family of God at the end of the great power experiment of the Church Age (John 14:1-3; Corinthians 15:51-57; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; and 1 John 3:1-2).
 - (3) **Charlie Company:** the resurrection of Old Testament believers and tribulational martyrs at the Second Advent (Daniel 12:13; Isaiah 26:19-20; Matthew 24:31; and Revelation 20:4).
 - (4) **Delta Company:** the resurrection of believers at the conclusion of the Millennium (Isaiah 66:22).

3. The Second Resurrection has just been noted. It is only for unbelievers following the destruction of the universe noted in 2 Peter 3:10-13.

Unbelievers are resurrected still in status quo spiritual death. They are transferred from Torments to the Great White Throne where they will be sentenced forever into the lake of fire. This is the Second Death. (Revelation 20:14)

8. The Rapture of Church-Age believers.

1. The Rapture of the Church is considered to be imminent under the principle that no prophecy remains that must be fulfilled before the Rapture may occur.
2. Paul believed that the Rapture was imminent by the use of personal pronouns:

1 Corinthians 15:51 - Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep [**experience physical death**], but we will all be changed,

v. 52 - in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we [ἡμεῖς (*hēmeís*): the personal masculine plural pronoun of ἐγώ (*egó*): “we”] will be changed.

3. This does not strictly indicate that Paul expected the Rapture to occur in his lifetime but it does indicate that he considered its occurrence to be imminent.
4. Paul gives detailed analyses of the Rapture in 1 Corinthians 15:50-57, Thessalonians 4:13-18, and 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12.
5. The Rapture is mandatory for believers to enter into the eternal state. Paul points this out in:

1 Corinthians 15:53 - For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.

6. Our mortal life cannot endure forever. It suffers the effects of aging and time. We must acquire a Forever Body that is provided by the Resurrection Body.
7. For our Eternal Life to sustain our physical bodies then those bodies must also have the capacity to exist eternally.
8. It is this victory that Paul considers the denouement to our life on this earth and he gives it a crescendo as he concludes chapter 15:

1 Corinthians 15:54 - But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory."

VISUAL:
Characteristics of the
Resurrection Body

9. By observing biblical passages that describe Jesus' resurrection body, we are able to describe the characteristics ours will possess at the Rapture:
 - (1) It does not appear unusual. Luke 24:13-32; John 20:11-16
 - (2) It can vanish from sight. Luke 24:31
 - (3) It can move through barriers. Matthew 27:65-66 cf. 28:5-6; John 20:19, 26
 - (4) It retains stigmata. Luke 24:39-40; John 20:20, 27 (at least for Jesus)
 - (5) It is made of flesh and bones. Luke 24:39
 - (6) It is capable of taking food. Luke 24:41-43; John 21:15
 - (7) It can move through interstellar space at warp speed. Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9
 - (8) It is imperishable and immortal.
1 Corinthians 15:54 cf. Philippians 3:21
9. Jesus and His twelve apostles gathered in the upper room during the Passover feast on the night He was betrayed.

10. During the event, Jesus spoke about His return which was a prophecy of the Rapture:

John 14:1 - Do not allow your soul to be disturbed. Believe in God! Believe also in Me!

v. 2 - "In My Father's house are many dwelling places. If I were not so, I would have told you. I go from one place to another to make ready a place to dwell for you and for your advantage.

v. 3 - "If I go and make ready a place for you, I will come again and receive you into My presence [**the Rapture**], that where I am, there you will be also.

v. 4 - "And you know the way I am going."

v. 5 - Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not understand to what place you are going, how do we know the way?"

v. 6 - Jesus said to him, "I am always the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me."

11. Conclusion: We serve a risen Savior. We are witnesses for the Prosecution. We are to learn doctrine, retain it, and apply it. We are to become *Prómachoi*, Front Rankers in the scrum of the Invisible War. Regardless of the circumstances the devil's world presents, we are guarded by the divinely provided wall of fire. Our duty is to be witness for the Prosecution. Our testimony is found in the power of the Word, of which Jesus reminded the apostles just prior to His ascension:

Luke 24:46 - "It is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,

v. 47 - and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

v. 48 - "For you are witnesses of these things."

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