

# *The Ordo Salutis*

## The Order of Salvation

### Step 12- Death and the Intermediate State

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As of 05/01/22

*“They, then, who are destined to die, need not be careful to inquire what death they are to die, but into what place death will usher them.” Augustine*

*“For death is no more than a turning of us over from time to eternity” William Penn*

*“Take care of your life and the Lord will take care of your death” George Whitefield*

*“We'll say ‘good night’ here and ‘good morning’ up there.” John Rice*

*“Death to the Christian is the funeral of all his sorrows and evils, and the resurrection, of all his joys.” James Aughy*

*“How strange this fear of death is! We are never frightened at a sunset.” George MacDonald*

*“We cannot enjoy peace in this world unless we are ready to yield to the will of God in respect of death. Our times are in His hand, at His sovereign disposal. We must accept that as best.” John Owen*

*“Never fear dying, beloved. Dying is the last, but the least matter that a Christian has to be anxious about. Fear living - that is a hard battle to fight, a stern discipline to endure, a rough voyage to undergo.” Charles Spurgeon*

*“The Jews (in the Wilderness) looked upon a serpent to be freed from serpents; and we look upon the death of Christ to be delivered from death.” Augustine*

*“Death is no more than passing from one room into another. But there's a difference for me, you know. Because in that other room I shall be able to see.” Helen Keller*

*“I don't so much pray that my death will be without pain, but that it will be without doubt.” John Piper*

*“I am not tired of my work, neither am I tired of the world; yet, when Christ calls me home, I shall go with gladness.” Adoniram Judson*

*“ It is grace at the beginning, and grace at the end. So that when you and I come to lie upon our death beds, the one thing that should comfort and help and strengthen us there is the thing that*

*helped us in the beginning. Not what we have been, not what we have done, but the Grace of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. The Christian life starts with grace, it must continue with grace, it ends with grace. Grace wondrous grace. By the grace of God I am what I am. Yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with me.*” Martyn Lloyd- Jones

*“As I go into a cemetery I like to think of the time when the dead shall rise from their graves. ... Thank God, our friends are not buried; they are only sown!”* Dwight L. Moody

*“At the place of execution, he again said a short prayer and then climbed the steps to the gallows, brave and composed. His death ensued after a few seconds. In almost fifty years that I worked as a doctor, I have hardly ever seen a man die so entirely submissive to the will of God”* Dietrich Bonhoeffer

*“Every man must do two things alone; he must do his own believing and his own dying.”* Martin Luther

*“Six feet by two-and-a-half is all the ground that the richest man in England will shortly occupy.”* William Tiptaft

*“Let your hope of heaven master your fear of death.”* William Gurnall

*“We are convinced that all of our race who die in infancy partake in the redemption wrought out by our Lord Jesus. Whatever some may think, we believe that the whole spirit and tone of the Word of God, as well as the nature of God Himself, lead us to believe that all who leave this world as babes are saved.”* Charles Spurgeon

*“No one can obtain from the Pope a dispensation for never dying.”* Thomas a Kempis

*“A human being does not cease to exist at death. It is change, not destruction, which takes place.”* Florence Nightingale

*“Someday you will read in the papers that D.L. Moody of East Northfield, is dead. Don't you believe a word of it! At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now; I shall have gone up higher, that is all, out of this old clay tenement into a house that is immortal- a body that death cannot touch, that sin cannot taint; a body fashioned like unto His glorious body.”* Dwight L. Moody

*“Let them fear death who do not fear sin.”* Thomas Watson

*“Death is as near to the young as to the old; here is all the difference: death stands behind the young man's back, before the old man's face.”* Thomas Adams

*“Where sin has been removed death can only interrupt the earthly life and usher in the heavenly.”* John MacArthur

**Note:** What the Bible teaches about Step 12 in the *Ordo Salutis* (the Order of Salvation) is not often thought about or discussed- much less taught. And the Result of this embarrassing Silence by far too many in the modern Church- is great Confusion. This section of our Study is designed to allow the Light of sacred Scripture to shine on this important Subject so we may “know” what we should believe about this Issue. The Apostle John wrote this in **1Corinthians 2:12&13:**

**12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God,  
13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.**

... so, it is God’s Will that we “**know the things freely given to us by God**”. And that *includes* how we should understand “Death and the Intermediate State.”

Now we all know what “*Death*” means- but what do we mean by the phrase, the “*Intermediate State*”? This is the time between the Death of a believer and the final Resurrection where he receives a “glorified” body. And all through the 2,000 years of Church History- there have been various ideas concerning this.

Some have held that during this time- believers are simply unconscious or they possibly may even go “out of existence”. And with all due respect to those who hold such views- the Bible simply does NOT teach this.

The biblical Evidence is that our soul continues on after our Death; and each person remains fully conscious in the Intermediate State- while they await their final Destiny of “resurrected Existence” in the new Heavens and new Earth. Please examine what the Apostle Paul taught about this from **Philippians 1:21-24:**

**21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.  
22 But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose.  
23 But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better;  
24 yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.**

In this Passage, Paul called, “*Death*” two things:

1. Gain
2. Very Much Better

... and that is NOT the usual way that we describe Death- even for believers. Most of the time- we see Death as a great Loss- and something to mourn and grieve over- even if the person who died has experienced the Miracle of the New Birth. But that is seeing things from the perspective of Man. And as believers, we should at least attempt to see things from the perspective of God- or do what the Puritans called and use the “Logic of Scripture”. And that would mean that we see Death as a great “Gain”; and to leave this earth in Death as being “very much better” than staying.

## **The Origin of Death**

Death is the absence of Life. And the Bible teaches that Death is the Result of Sin. And the Sin that results in Death may be our own *personal* Sin or it may be the Original Sin of Adam- or a combination of both. In **1Corinthians 15:22a**, God the Holy Spirit “moved” on the Apostle Paul to infallibly write this:

**For as in Adam all die ...**

... and then he said this in **Romans 5:12**:

**Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—**

And this tells us many things- among them is the Reality that before Adam sinned- nothing died.<sup>1</sup> But after Adam sinned- EVERYTHING died. Plants died; animals died; stars died; galaxies died; and now- people died.

But Sin brought about two kinds of Death:

1. Physical
2. Eternal

... we die physically now- primarily because of the “Original Sin” of Adam.

**1Corinthians 15:22**

**For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.**

Primarily, we all die (in both ways) because of Adam’s Sin that has been imputed to each successive generation through the seed of the Father.<sup>2</sup> But we contribute to both types of Death because of our own Sins as well.

So, it is true to say that we do not become “sinners” because we sin. Instead, we sin- because we are ALREADY sinners from the very moment of conception.

**We are Fully Conscious When We Die**

Paul spoke of having the desire "**to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better**" (**Philippians 1:23**). Notice first of all that Paul speaks of Death as a “*Departure*” (from the physical body). But this Departure is NOT into temporary “nothingness” or “unconsciousness”- but to be *with Christ!* And if we are with Christ (after we have died), then we *continue in* “Cognizant Existence” or Existence with full capabilities- including our ability to know and reason.

Notice that Paul speaks of this State as "**very much better**" than the present State on the earth. It would be very hard to say that about a State of complete unconsciousness. Particularly when we consider that Paul's Passion was to know Christ, it would seem that the reason the State beyond Death is so much “better” than this present Life is because we are with Christ *and we*

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<sup>1</sup> This is one of the most powerful Rebukes against Darwinian Evolution- which requires all species to live and die many times as they evolve. But the Bible clearly teaches that before Adam sinned- nothing died.

<sup>2</sup> This is part of the Doctrine of Original Sin. The other part is that, in addition of dying- we are also personally guilty of the Original Sin of Adam because we were in his loins when he sinned.

*know it!* If we were suddenly unconscious at Death until the Resurrection<sup>3</sup>, wouldn't it be better to remain in *this Life* because at least then we would have conscious Fellowship with Christ?

Also, in **2Corinthians 5:6**, Paul said,

**... while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—**

... and then in **2Corinthians 5:6**, he said that he would,

**... prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.**

Now it is very significant that the Apostle speaks of the possibility of being *absent* from the physical body. And this implies that we indeed do have souls which continue to exist- even after the body dies. Also, notice again that he speaks of this State of being with the Lord and absent from the body- as his Preference, which indicates (as in **Philippians 1:23**) that we not only consciously continue to exist between Death and the Resurrection, but that we are very aware of our Existence.

Now even though the Narrative about the thief on the cross has been used by some to prove about every point in Christian Theology, his case is still relevant here:

**Luke 23:43**

**And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.**

The Jehovah's Witness's *New World Translation* purposefully omits the comma after the word, "you" so that this verse reads, "Truly I say to you today, you shall be with Me in Paradise,"- giving the impression that "today" refers simply to the time of Jesus' Statement and NOT that the thief would be in Paradise on the same day as Jesus spoke.

Now the ONLY reason they do this- is because that Statement contradicts what they *already* believe about Death- and they have no problem altering the Bible to make it "fit in" with their own Doctrine. But the context of this verse *demand*s that the "today" refers to when the thief on the cross would be with Jesus in Paradise, because Jesus is responding to his request in the previous verse:

**Luke 23:42**

**Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!**

... and the response,

**Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise**

... can, in this context, ONLY be taken to mean, "*Not only will I remember you when I come in my Kingdom, but already today you shall be with me in Heaven.*"

Also, **The Revelation 6:9** speaks of John seeing underneath the altar,

**... the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained;**

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<sup>3</sup> This is the false Teaching of "soul sleep"

These individuals are surely NOT in a State of “Soul Sleep” because in the next verse they cry out with a loud voice,

**... How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth? (The Revelation 6:10b)**

... showing that they are fully conscious; fully aware of what is going on around them; and able to communicate.