

Your Kingdom Come: The Doctrine of Eschatology

Lesson 2

The Living and the Dead

Lesson Guide



thirdmill

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CONTENTS

HOW TO USE THIS LESSON GUIDE	1
NOTES.....	2
I. INTRODUCTION (0:20).....	2
II. PRESENT STATE (2:00)	2
A. Unregenerate (3:33).....	2
1. Spiritual Death (4:08).....	3
2. Moral Ability (10:05)	3
3. Enmity with God (14:37).....	4
B. Regenerate (17:26)	5
1. Spiritual Life (17:57).....	5
2. Moral Ability (22:30)	5
3. Reconciliation to God (29:15).....	7
III. INTERMEDIATE STATE (33:40).....	8
A. Physical Death (35:21)	8
B. Unregenerate Souls (41:12)	9
C. Regenerate Souls (47:56).....	10
1. Lord's presence (48:29).....	10
2. Fellowship (52:59).....	11
3. Perfect holiness (54:43)	12
IV. FINAL STATE (59:58).....	13
A. Physical Resurrection (1:01:34)	13
B. Unregenerate (1:08:22).....	14
C. Regenerate (1:17:34)	15
1. Perfect bodies (1:18:19).....	15
2. New heavens and new earth (1:23:40)	16
3. Rewards (1:26:05)	17
V. CONCLUSION (1:27:26).....	17
REVIEW QUESTIONS	18
APPLICATION QUESTIONS	23
GLOSSARY	24

HOW TO USE THIS LESSON GUIDE

This lesson guide is designed for use in conjunction with the associated video. If you do not have access to the video, the lesson guide will also work with the audio and/or manuscript versions of the lesson. Additionally, the video and lesson guide are intended to be used in a learning community, but they also can be used for individual study if necessary.

- **Before you watch the lesson**
 - **Prepare** — Complete any recommended readings.
 - **Schedule viewing** — The Notes section of the lesson guide has been divided into segments that correspond to the video. Using the time codes found in parentheses beside each major division, determine where to begin and end your viewing session. IIM lessons are densely packed with information, so you may also want to schedule breaks. Breaks should be scheduled at major divisions.
- **While you are watching the lesson**
 - **Take notes** — The Notes section of the lesson guide contains a basic outline of the lesson, including the time codes for the beginning of each segment and key notes to guide you through the information. Many of the main ideas are already summarized, but make sure to supplement these with your own notes. You should also add supporting details that will help you to remember, describe, and defend the main ideas.
 - **Record comments and questions** — As you watch the video, you may have comments and/or questions on what you are learning. Use the margins to record your comments and questions so that you can share these with the group following the viewing session.
 - **Pause/replay portions of the lesson** — You may find it helpful to pause or replay the video at certain points in order to write additional notes, review difficult concepts, or discuss points of interest.
- **After you watch the lesson**
 - **Complete Review Questions** — Review Questions are based on the basic content of the lesson. You should answer Review Questions in the space provided. These questions should be completed individually rather than in a group.
 - **Answer/discuss Application Questions** — Application Questions are questions relating the content of the lesson to Christian living, theology, and ministry. Application questions are appropriate for written assignments or as topics for group discussions. For written assignments, it is recommended that answers not exceed one page in length.

Notes

I. Introduction (0:20)

Eschatology – the study or doctrine of last things

Individual eschatology – the study of how individual human beings experience the events of the last days

II. Present State (2:00)

During the last days, or eschaton:

- believers (“the regenerate”) – experience both hardships of “this age” (e.g., sin, death) and blessings of the “age to come” (e.g., forgiveness, salvation)
- unbelievers (“the unregenerate”) – experience mostly the hardships of “this age”

Regenerate – recreated or reborn; spiritually living

Unregenerate – not recreated or reborn; spiritually dead

A. Unregenerate (3:33)

Fallen human beings are born spiritually dead and remain in this state unless they are renewed or “regenerated” by the Holy Spirit.

1. **Spiritual Death (4:08)**

Even when we're dead spiritually, our souls are still active in our bodies.

When Adam and Eve rebelled against God in the Garden of Eden, God cursed humanity with spiritual death (Genesis 2–3).

Spiritual corruption is the essence of spiritual death (sin lives inside our bodies and controls our minds).

Spiritual death affects all the naturally conceived descendants of Adam and Eve (John 3:5-7, Romans 8:10, Colossians 2:13).

2. **Moral Ability (10:05)**

Moral inability – no capacity to please God or merit his blessings

Augustine's states of moral ability:

- *posse non peccare* – the ability not to sin (Adam and Eve's moral state before the Fall)
- *non posse non peccare* – the inability not to sin (Adam and Eve's moral state after the Fall)

After the Fall, all of Adam and Eve's naturally generated descendants lost the moral ability to avoid sin.

The unregenerate live under sin's control and remain in the state of spiritual death until God saves them.

The unregenerate are morally incapable of doing works that God considers to be good (Luke 6:43-45; Romans 8:6-8).

3. Enmity with God (14:37)

The unregenerate are God's enemies and on the side of Satan; they love their sin and hate God (Ephesians 2:1-3).

As God's enemies, they stand condemned, doomed to suffer his everlasting wrath (Romans 5:10; Colossians 1:21; John 8:42-44; James 4:4).

B. Regenerate (17:26)

The regenerate are those who have been born again (or regenerated) through the work of the Holy Spirit.

1. Spiritual Life (17:57)

The Bible teaches that to become regenerate, our souls must pass from death into life:

- “spiritual resurrection” – John 5:24; Ephesians 2:4-5; Colossians 2:13
- “rebirth” – John 3:3-6; Titus 3:5

When the Holy Spirit regenerates us, our souls pass from death into life that is eternal.

The regenerate already enjoy eternal life in our present state (John 10:28; 1 Timothy 6:12; 1 John 5:11-13).

2. Moral Ability (22:30)

Moral ability – the capacity to please God and merit his blessings

Our moral ability does *not* enable us to *earn* salvation, but it *does* empower us to obey God's will and pursue the blessings of his kingdom.

Augustine's states of moral ability:

- *posse non peccare* – the ability not to sin (Adam and Eve's moral state before the Fall)
- *non posse non peccare* – the inability not to sin (Adam and Eve's moral state after the Fall)
- *posse non peccare* – the ability not to sin (moral state regained after regeneration by the Holy Spirit)

The Holy Spirit doesn't completely remove sin's corruption and influence from our lives (Romans 7:14-25; Galatians 5:17; 1 Peter 2:11).

Even though we continue to struggle with sin, we also do good works because of the Spirit's influence (Philippians 2:13).

All evangelical theologians agree that God can claim credit for our good works, but some say that the regenerate can claim *some* merit too.

God has restored our moral ability, and he holds us accountable for doing good works.

3. Reconciliation to God (29:15)

Through Christ's death, we've been brought into his household as heirs of his covenant promises (Romans 5:10; Colossians 1:21-22).

Because we're united to Christ:

- we share Jesus' status as God's favored Son
- God credits Christ's perfections and righteousness to our account
- no punishment remains for us – only blessings

Union with Christ is a fulfillment of God's eschatological promises (2 Corinthians 5:17).

III. Intermediate State (33:40)

Intermediate state – the time *between* our present state of bodily life on the current earth, and our future state of bodily life in the new heavens and new earth

A. Physical Death (35:21)

Physical death is part of the curse God laid on humanity because of Adam's sin (Genesis 2:17).

Just as Adam's sin spread *spiritual* death to the entire human race, it also spread *physical* death to us (Romans 5:12-17).

Our bodies are still part of us, even after we die (1 Kings 17:20-22; John 11:43-44).

Heaven will be wonderful for the souls of the regenerate, but we still hope for full restoration in the future.

B. Unregenerate Souls (41:12)

Our souls continue to exist, think, and feel even after our bodies die.

When the unregenerate's spirit returns to God, it begins suffering its just punishment in hell (Luke 12:4-5).

Terms used for "hell" in Scripture:

- *Sheol* – home of unregenerate souls (Psalm 9:17)
- *abaddon* – “destruction” (Job 26:6; Proverbs 15:11)
- *bowr* – “pit”; a place of punishment (Isaiah 14:15-19)
- *Hades* – place of punishment (Luke 10:15)
- *abussos* – “abyss”
 - prison for demons (Luke 8:31; Revelation 9:1-11)
 - place for human souls, including Jesus' righteous soul (Romans 10:7)
- Gehenna – place of fiery punishment, torment and destruction (Matthew 5:22; Mark 9:43; James 3:3)

In Luke 16:19-31, Jesus described a rich man who died and was *immediately* tormented in Hades.

C. Regenerate Souls (47:56)

After death, regenerate souls enjoy a foretaste of their final blessings.

1. Lord's presence (48:29)

When the regenerate die, their souls are immediately taken into God's presence in heaven (Luke 23:43; Revelation 6:9; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23).

Regenerate souls are taken into the Lord's presence in heaven regardless of whether or not their bodies rest in physical graves.

Alternate view: "soul sleep" – our souls remain with our bodies after death, as if sleeping, until Jesus returns (Daniel 12:2; 1 Corinthians 15:51).

The view of "soul sleep" is not consistent with Scripture:

- Jesus, Paul and others believed they would enjoy each other's presence in heaven immediately upon their deaths.
- Martyrs are already there, fully conscious.

The Bible uses the term “sleeping” as a euphemism for death (John 11:11-14).

2. Fellowship (52:59)

During the intermediate state, regenerate souls fellowship with other regenerate souls in heaven:

- Martyrs in heaven know and fellowship with each other and together appeal to God to hasten the final judgment (Revelation 6:9-10).
- Moses and Elijah spoke with Jesus and with each other at the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:3; Mark 9:4; Luke 9:30, 31).
- Jesus’ account of Abraham and the rich man (Luke 16:26) suggests that Abraham and Lazarus are in the fellowship of all the other regenerate souls.
- Hebrews speaks of a heavenly assembly that includes every regenerate person who has experienced physical death (Hebrews 11:40, 12:22, 23).

3. Perfect holiness (54:43)

During the intermediate state, regenerate souls reach perfect holiness.

Human holiness – moral purity and acceptability in God’s presence

Augustine’s states of moral ability:

- *posse non peccare* – the ability not to sin (Adam and Eve’s moral state before the Fall)
- *non posse non peccare* – the inability not to sin (Adam and Eve’s moral state after the Fall)
- *posse non peccare* – the ability not to sin (moral state regained after regeneration by the Holy Spirit)
- *non posse peccare* – the inability to sin (moral state when we enter the final state of redemption)

Scripture suggests that we lose the ability to sin when we enter the intermediate state (Hebrews 12:23).

“The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory” (*Westminster Shorter Catechism*, Question 37).

John Owen argued that while sin indwells our hearts, it uses our bodies to fight against our souls (1 Peter 2:11; James 4:1; Romans 6:12; 7:22-23).

“We have a ‘body of death’ ... from whence we are not delivered but by the death of our bodies” (John Owen, *Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers*, chapter 2).

IV. Final State (59:58)

Three stages of the last days:

- Inauguration – Jesus’ life and earthly ministry, including the foundational work done by the first-century apostles and prophets
- Continuation – period covered by the present state and intermediate state of individual eschatology
- Consummation – in individual eschatology, the stage when all human beings simultaneously reach their final state

A. Physical Resurrection (1:01:34)

General resurrection – when the physical bodies of everyone that has ever died will be resurrected to face God’s final judgment

Old Testament prophets taught that the physical bodies that had once died would rise again from the dust in order to face divine judgment (Daniel 12:2; Isaiah 26:19-21).

Jesus said that all the dead will rise at the general resurrection in order to face God's judgment (John 5:28-29).

The New Testament teaches that the general resurrection will take place at the judgment throne of God (Revelation 20:11-13).

Those that are still alive when judgment day arrives will also be judged (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10).

B. Unregenerate (1:08:22)

All fallen human beings deserve punishment because of Adam's sin.

The unregenerate suffer the appropriate punishment for their sins (Matthew 16:27).

The New Testament typically describes hell as a place of darkness or fire:

- Darkness
 - God doesn't manifest his glorious, gracious presence in hell (2 Thessalonians 1:9).
 - God is present in hell only as the jailor and punisher.

- Fire
 - eternal fire (Jude 7)
 - lake of fire (Revelation 20:14-15)
 - fiery furnace (Matthew 13:50)
 - “Gehenna” (*geenna*) – place of fiery punishment, torment and destruction (identified with the Valley of Hinnom)

Hell and its punishments will never end for the wicked (2 Thessalonians 1:9; Matthew 25:41, 46; Hebrews 6:2).

C. Regenerate (1:17:34)

For the regenerate, God’s final judgments will bring only blessings.

1. Perfect bodies (1:18:19)

Our salvation is completed in the final state when our bodies are redeemed (Romans 8:23).

Glorification – the final state of salvation when our bodies are renewed and perfected (1 Corinthians 15:52-54; Philippians 3:21).

Jesus' resurrected body was physical and substantive:

- He ate (Luke 24:30-43).
- Thomas touched Jesus' side where he had been pierced (John 20:27).

His resurrected body was also different from his body that died:

- He appeared in rooms without having to enter (Luke 24:36; John 20:19, 26).
- He could vanish suddenly (Luke 24:31).

There is continuity between our natural body and spiritual body, but the spiritual body has lost the natural body's corruption and gained glorious attributes for eternal life (1 Corinthians 15:42-44).

2. New heavens and new earth (1:23:40)

We'll receive our full and complete blessings when we live *bodily* in the new heavens and new earth.

God indicated that when the Redeemer came, he would reverse the effects of the curse laid on Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:15).

In the new heavens and new earth, God's curse on the earth will be completely removed.

3. Rewards (1:26:05)

The regenerate will be rewarded for what Christ has done on their behalf, for their faithfulness, and for the good they have done in obedience to God:

- a “crown of righteousness” – 2 Timothy 4:8
- a “crown of glory” – 1 Peter 5:4
- reigning with Christ – 2 Timothy 2:12
- God's final “Sabbath rest” – Hebrews 4:1-11
- treasure stored up in heaven – Matthew 6:20; Mark 10:21; Luke 12:33

V. Conclusion (1:27:26)

3. How do the regenerate come to experience spiritual life in the present state? How does this affect their moral ability?

4. What is the intermediate state? What makes it unusual?

5. Why do both the regenerate and unregenerate experience physical death?

6. How do unregenerate souls experience the intermediate state? What do the names typically used for "hell" in Scripture teach us about the nature of their situation?

9. Describe the final state of the unregenerate. How long will this state last?

10. Describe the final state of the regenerate. According to Scripture, what will the new heavens and new earth be like?

Application Questions

1. Can you recall the time when you were spiritually “reborn”? What were the circumstances or events that led you to spiritual life?
2. How would you respond to someone who says that it’s unjust for God to punish all humanity for Adam’s sin?
3. Because the unregenerate are not motivated by love for God, even their good deeds do not earn God’s favor. How does this affect your perspective on good works? What role do you think good works play in the Christian life?
4. The unregenerate heart is hostile to God. What various approaches have you used to try to reach those who are at enmity with God?
5. How do we as Christians experience eternal life in the present?
6. We will not be completely free from sin while we live in our mortal bodies. How does this truth cause you to rely on God’s strength in your struggle against sin?
7. If we know that our souls go to be with God after we die, why is the physical death of a believer still so difficult for us to accept? How can we comfort others who are grieving the loss of a believing loved one?
8. We can have hope that we will enjoy the blessings of the intermediate state after we die. How might the hope for these future blessings encourage you today?
9. Many people dislike the doctrine of hell and eternal torment. How might you demonstrate the justice of hell to those who object to this biblical teaching? Do you think you should talk about hell in evangelistic conversations? Why or why not?
10. The Bible teaches that we will be resurrected with eternal, glorified and physical bodies. What does this doctrine teach us about the value of our physical bodies?
11. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?

Glossary

abaddon – Hebrew term (transliteration) that means “destruction”; sometimes used as a synonym for hell

abussos – Greek term (transliteration) for “abyss”; generally refers to a prison for demons, but can also refer to a place for human souls

apodidómi – Greek term (transliteration) for “to repay” or “to reward”

Augustine – (A.D. 354-430) Bishop of Hippo who believed in the Scriptures as our final authority in doctrine and considered the creeds of the church to be helpful summaries of scriptural teaching; wrote numerous works that continue to influence the church today

bowr – Hebrew term (transliteration) for “pit”

consummation – Third and final stage of inaugurated eschatology when Christ will return and fulfill God's ultimate purpose for all of history

continuation – Second or middle stage of inaugurated eschatology; the period of the kingdom of God after Christ's first advent but before the final victory

covenant – A binding legal agreement made between two people or groups of people, or between God and a person or group of people

eschatology – The study or doctrine of the last days

eschaton – The last stage of world history; the last or latter days

eschatos – Greek term (transliteration) meaning “last,” “end,” “final”

eternal life – To know God and live forever in the full blessing of God

Gehenna – A place of fiery punishment, torment and destruction

general resurrection – The resurrection of all people in order to face God's final judgment when Christ returns in glory

glorification – The final stage of our salvation, when we receive a perfect eternal body and fully become what we were meant to be, having complete victory over sin and death

Hades – Greek term (transliteration) used in the New Testament, usually meaning the abode of wicked souls, but sometimes referring to the place of both the righteous and the wicked

inauguration – First stage in inaugurated eschatology; refers to Christ's first coming and the ministries of his apostles and prophets

individual eschatology – The study of how individual human beings experience the events of the last days

intermediate state – The state between our lives on earth now and the lives we will have in the resurrection

moral ability – The capacity to please God and merit his blessings

moral inability – No capacity to please God or merit *his blessings*

non posse non peccare – Latin phrase meaning “the inability not to sin”; used by Augustine to describe humanity's condition after the Fall

non posse peccare – Latin phrase meaning “the inability to sin”; used by Augustine to describe redeemed humanity's condition in our final state

Owen, John – (1616-1683) English theologian, pastor and author of numerous important theological works

posse non peccare – Latin phrase meaning “the ability not to sin”; used by Augustine to describe humanity's condition before the Fall and after the Holy Spirit has regenerated our souls

regenerate – Term used in theology to mean reborn, recreated, spiritually alive

Sheol – Hebrew term (transliteration) used in the Old Testament to refer to the place of departed spirits, both the righteous and the wicked

soul – The immortal, immaterial part of a human being; all the inner, non-physical aspects of our being

soul sleep – A view of physical death in which our souls remain with our bodies, unconscious until Jesus returns (inconsistent with Scripture)

unregenerate – Term used in theology to mean not reborn, not recreated, spiritually dead

Westminster Shorter Catechism – A traditional Protestant summary of Christian teaching, originally published in 1647