

The Major Themes of the Bible Applied to Everyday Life: The Resurrection and Judgment Day

1. What happens when we die?

WCF 32.1 The bodies of men, after death, return to dust, and see corruption: but their souls, which neither die nor sleep, having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them: the souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God, in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies. And the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. Beside these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledges none.

2. What happens to us if we die before Christ returns? What happens to our body? What happens to our soul?

WCF 32.2 At the last day, such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed: and all the dead shall be raised up, with the selfsame bodies, and none other (although with different qualities), which shall be united again to their souls forever.

3. What do we mean when we say (in the Apostles' Creed, for example) that we believe in the resurrection of the body?
4. Many theologians (and congregations) in the past few centuries have asserted that Christ did not truly rise from the dead. Why is the resurrection imperative to the Christian faith? Why is it imperative to our resurrections?

¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. (1 Corinthians 15:17-18)

5. Will we have new bodies?

6. What will they look like?

(WCF 33.1) God has appointed a day, wherein He will judge the world, in righteousness, by Jesus Christ, to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father.

7. When will Christ return?

8. What will this look like?

¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)

(WCF 33.1 continued) In which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but likewise all persons that have lived upon earth shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds; and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.

9. What?! Is the Confession teaching that we are judged by works? What does the Bible say about this???

¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11-15)

10. Who will be judged in the final judgement?

11. What does it mean that “the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done?” Are we judged by works?

12. What are these two books? What is written on each one?

13. Do good works matter in the final judgment?

14. Why is it important that we understand the judgment? How is it encouraging to us?

(WCF 33.3) As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin; and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity: so will He have that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come; and may be ever prepared to say, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly, Amen.

15. The average modern person does not believe in final judgment or any kind of accountability for actions. How is this discouraging? What state of mind does it lead to?

16. Why has God appointed a day of judgment?

WCF 33.2 The end of God's appointing this day is for the manifestation of the glory of His mercy, in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of His justice, in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient. For then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fullness of joy and refreshing, which shall come from the presence of the Lord; but the wicked who know not God, and obey not the Gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

17. What will everlasting life be like?

18. How are the new heavens and new earth described in Revelation?

*When we've been there ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we've first begun!*