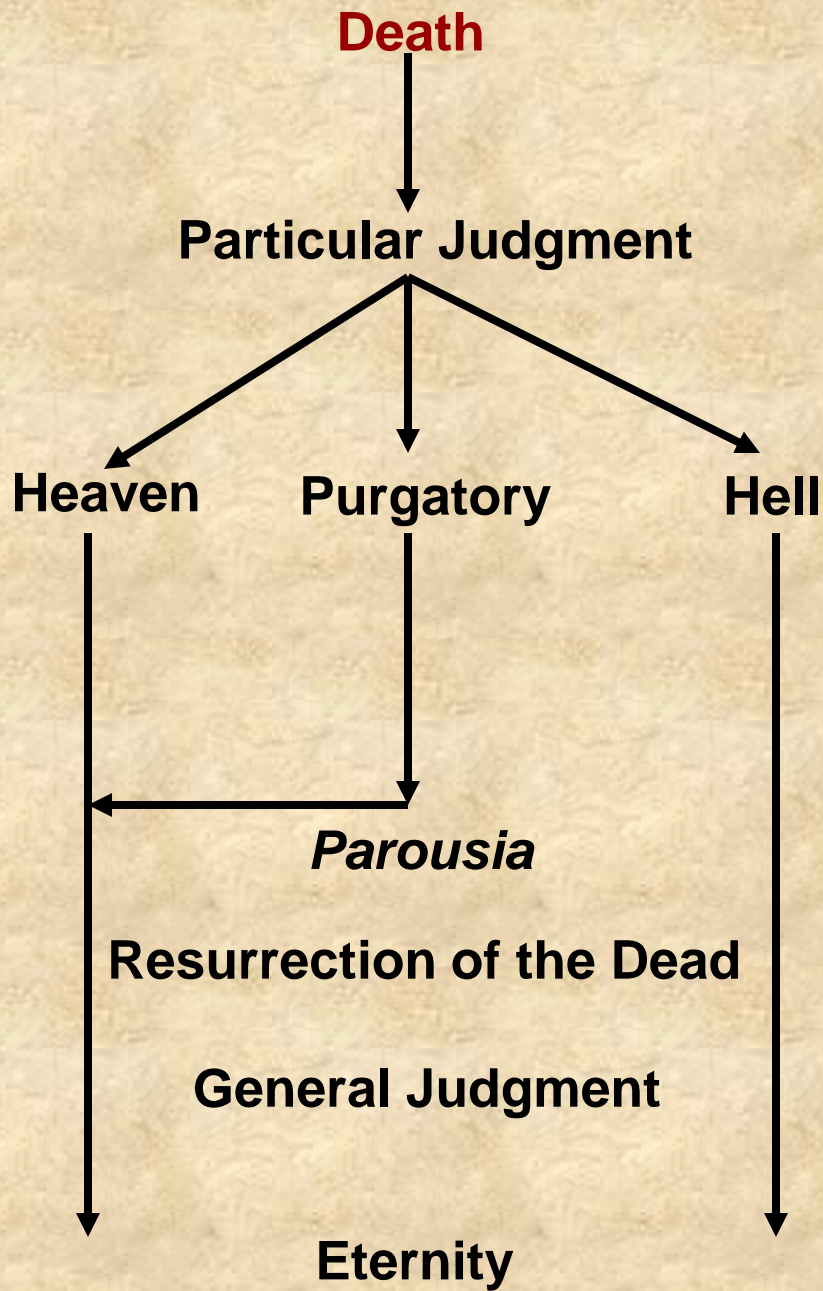


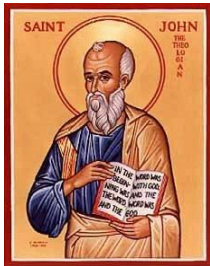
ESCHATOLOGY: ***The Last Things***

**Part VIIIa:
Death and
Particular Judgment**





Revelation 6: 8



I looked, and there was **a pale green horse**. Its rider was named **Death**, and Hades accompanied him. They were given authority over a quarter of the earth, to kill with sword, famine, and plague, and by means of the beasts of the earth.



Death

Christians believe that human death closes the state of human life or the time of probation.

Scripture speaks of death in many ways:

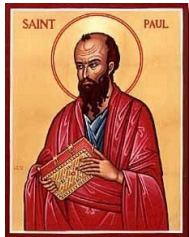
- as a return to dirt (Genesis 3:19);
- as a departure (2 Timothy 4:6; Philippians 1:23);
- to be at home (2 Corinthians 5:8-9);
- a discarding of a tent (2 Peter 1: 13-14);
- a sleeping (Matthew 9:24, John 11:11-13);
- a rest (Revelation 14:13);
- a return to God (Ecclesiastes 12:7);
- to be with Christ (Philippians 1:23); and
- to live with Christ (2 Timothy 2:11).

Ecclesiastes 12:5-7



Because man goes to his lasting home, and mourners go about the streets; Before the silver cord is snapped and the golden bowl is broken, And the pitcher is shattered at the spring, and the broken pulley falls into the well, And **the dust returns to the earth** as it once was, and **the life breath returns to God** who gave it.

2 Corinthians 5:1

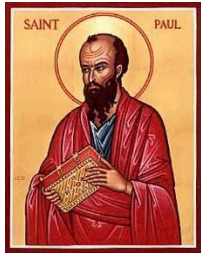


For we know that if our earthly dwelling, a tent, should be destroyed, we have **a building from God**, a dwelling not made with hands, eternal in heaven.

2 Corinthians 5:4

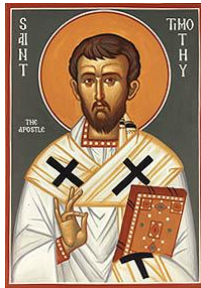
For while we are in this tent we groan and are weighed down, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that **what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.**

2 Corinthians 5:8



Yet we are courageous, and we would rather leave the body and **go home** to the Lord.

2 Timothy 4:6

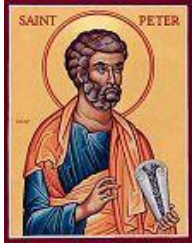


For I am already being poured out like a libation, and the **time of my departure** is at hand.

Philippians 1:21-23

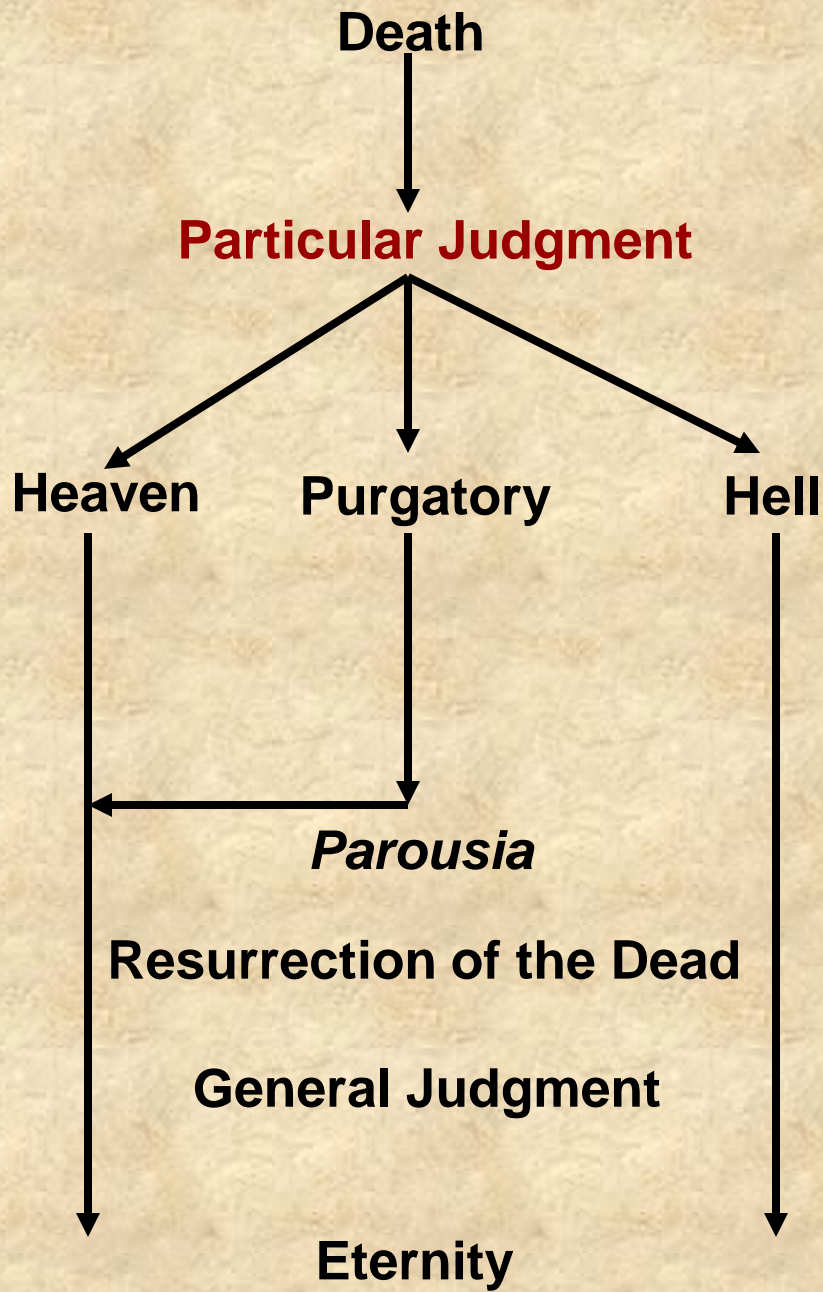
For to me life is Christ, and death is gain. If I go on living in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. And I do not know which I shall choose. I am caught between the two. I long to depart this life and **be with Christ**, (for) that is far better.

2 Peter 1:13-14



I think it right, as long as I am in this “tent,” to stir you up by a reminder, since I know that I will soon have **to put it aside**, as indeed our Lord Jesus Christ has shown me.





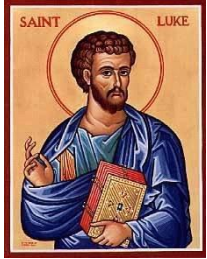
Immediately after Death: Particular Judgment

Catholic Christians and many other Christians believe that **immediately after death** the souls of men and women go either to heaven (or prior to that, purgatory), or to hell definitively.



Michelangelo's
Last Judgment
Sistine Chapel
Vatican City

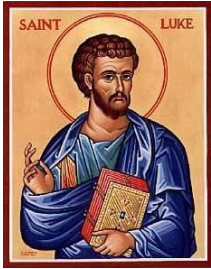
Luke 16: 19-36



(Jesus said to them [the Pharisees]:...) “There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day. And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. Dogs even used to come and lick his sores. When the poor man died, he was **carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham**. The rich man also died and was buried, and **from the netherworld, where he was in torment**, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he cried out, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for **I am suffering torment in these flames.**’ ~

Abraham replied, 'My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented. Moreover, between us and you **a great chasm** is established to prevent anyone from crossing who might wish to go from our side to yours or from your side to ours.' He said, 'Then I beg you, father, send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they too come to this place of torment.' But Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them.' He said, 'Oh no, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' Then Abraham said, '**If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.**'"

Luke 23: 43



He (Jesus) replied to him, “Amen, I say to you, today you will **be with me in Paradise.**”

2 Corinthians 5: 6-8

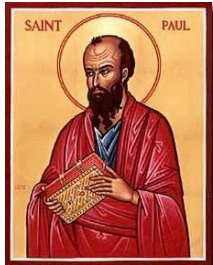


So we are always courageous, although we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yet we are courageous, and we would rather **leave the body and go home to the Lord.**

1 Thessalonians 5:10

(Jesus) died for us, so that **whether we are awake or asleep** we may live together with him.

Philippians 1:21-23



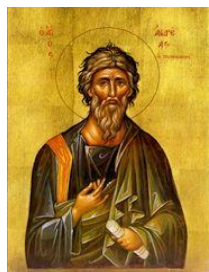
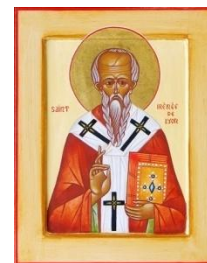
For to me **life is Christ, and death is gain**. If I go on living in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. And I do not know which I shall choose. I am caught between the two. I long to depart this life and be with Christ, (for) that is far better.



The constant faith of the Church attests to the faith in the permanency of human death. That faith is best described in the writings of the Fathers of the Church.

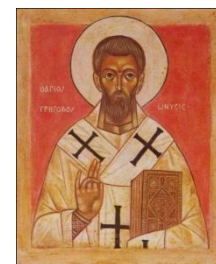


Irenaeus of Lyons (c.130-200), set forth the idea of death as the separation of the soul from the body.



The identical idea is found in **Tertullian** in the third century;

Gregory of Nyssa (c. 330-395) in the fourth.

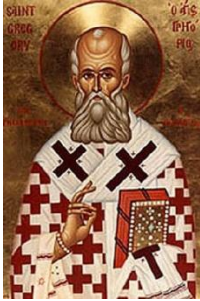


That death as a separation of the soul from the body is graphically described by **Augustine of Hippo (354-439)** in his book, *The City of God*.



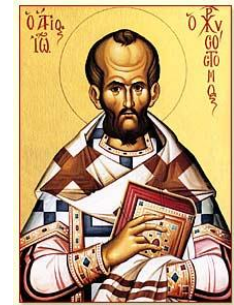
Clement of Rome (d. c.100) affirmed the permanency of death as separation and the impossibility of meriting or losing meriting after death.

Cyprian of Carthage (c. 200-258) mentions the same fact several times in his writings.

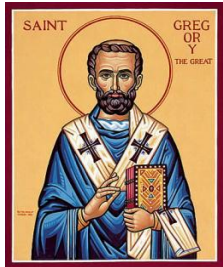


Later **Gregory of Nazianzus (329-389)** and

John Chrysostom of Constantinople (347-407) mention the fact several times.



It also occurs in **Gregory the Great in Rome (540-604).**



The Magisterium of the Church has confirmed throughout centuries the eternal lot of all souls, either in heaven, purgatory or hell is decided once for all at the moment of death.

Benedict XII, *Benedictus Deus*, January 29, 1336,
“We define that the souls of all the saints who have left this life soon after individual death are or will be in heaven and have eternal life; in addition we define that the souls of those dying in actual mortal sin soon after individual death descend into hell.”
D. 530



Pope Benedict XIII



Council of Lyons II, 1274

“We believe...that those truly penitent die in charity before they have done sufficient penance for their sins of omission and commission, their souls are **cleansed after death** in purgatorial or cleansing punishments; ... the souls of those who have not committed any sin at all after they received holy baptism, and the souls of those who have committed sin, but have been cleansed, either while they were in the body or afterwards ... are **promptly taken up into heaven**. The souls of those who die in mortal sin or with only original sin soon **go down into hell**, but there they will receive different punishments.”

(D 464)

St. Bonaventure at the
Council of Lyons II

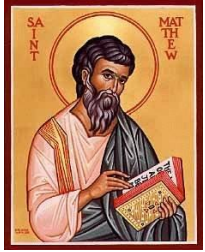


Reincarnation

It is not uncommon that people under the influence of the New Age Movement and Hollywood movies ask about the possibility of another or previous life or other lives for the soul. Catholic Christianity and all orthodox Christian faith communities have always found in the Word of God clear revelation of the unique nature of this life, of individual death and a definitive judgment for the soul.

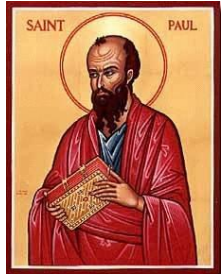


Matthew 25: 31-41



(Then Jesus told the crowds and his disciples: ...) “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’ ... Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’”

2 Corinthians 5:10



For we must all **appear before the judgment seat** of Christ, so that each one may receive recompense, according to what he did in the body, whether good or evil.

Luke 16: 19-36



(Jesus said to them [the Pharisees]:...) “There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day. And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores ...”

Hebrews 9:27-28



Just as it is appointed **that human beings die once**, and after this the judgment, so also Christ, offered once to take away the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to take away sin but to bring salvation to those who eagerly await him.

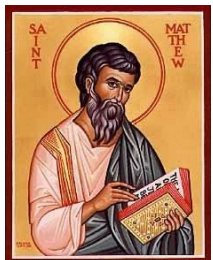
Being Taken Up Into Heaven

The question of those still alive at the time of the end of the world has always concerned believers. Some evangelical Christians have developed a teaching on the so-called “rapture.” It is based on a passage from Matthew's Gospel. Some believe in a rapture before Jesus' second coming. These teachings began in 1830 in the Plymouth Church in England from a man named John Nelson Darby.



Catholic Christians simply accept Christ's explanation of those still alive at the end of the world.

Matthew 24:36-42



(In reply, Jesus said to them:) “But of that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. For as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. In (those) days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day that Noah entered the ark. They did not know until the flood came and carried them all away. So will it be (also) at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be out in the field; one will **be taken**, and one will **be left**. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will **be taken**, and one will **be left**. Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come.”

The language of these verses:

“Two men will be out in the field; one will **be taken**, and one will **be left**. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will **be taken**, and one will **be left**.”

This may appear to support the “left behind” phenomenon. The Church teaches that the “taken . . . left” means “taken” into the kingdom; “left” for destruction. People in the same or similar situations--”out in the field; grinding at the mill”--will be dealt with in opposite ways. The difference in treatment to those alive at the end is going to be based on their readiness for the coming of the Son of Man, the “staying awake”--the vigilance and readiness called for in the Gospels because we do not know the time of Christ’s coming. We must always be ready.

Paul says that

(1) the **resurrection of the dead will precede the second coming.**

According to Paul, the Lord will command those who have suffered human death to rise. Only then

(2) will **those still living at the end of time join the resurrected dead.** Both groups together

(3) will be **witnesses to Christ's coming.** *There are not two comings of Jesus.*

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18



For the Lord himself, with a word of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God, will come down from heaven, and **the dead in Christ will rise first.** 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.** Thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore, console one another with these words.

End of
**Eschatology, Death and Particular Judgment,
Part VIIIa**

Go to
Eschatology, Heaven, Hell, Part VIIIb