



Ordo Salutis (Order of Salvation)

Lesson 8: Glorification

Key Verse: Romans 8:30

“and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.”

Introduction

What is glorification? Glorification is the radical transformation of both the body and the soul of believers, perfecting them in holiness, and thereby fitting them for eternal life on the new earth in perfect communion with the triune God.¹ It is the final step in the application of redemption.

However, glorification is often confused with the death of a believer when the soul departs to be with Christ (Luke 23:43; Phil. 1:23). Paul said in 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.” What Paul is referring to is the intermediate state in which the soul awaits the resurrection of the body. Glorification involves both soul and body, which does not take place when the believer’s soul enters the current intermediate heaven but takes place at the return of Christ. Glorification is also not to be confused with the final restoration of the earth. Just as creation was cursed because of man’s sin (Gen. 3:14–19; Rom. 8:20), so it will also be redeemed as a result of man’s redemption (Rom. 8:20–21; 2 Pet. 3:7; Rev. 21:1).² This restoration is not the same as the glorification of the believer. Finally, it should be understood that not all believers will be glorified at the same time. The dead in Christ and all those who are alive at the return of Christ will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor. 15:23, 52; 1 Thess. 4:16–17). Yet there will be those who repent and believe in Christ during the of the tribulation. These tribulation saints, along with Old Testament saints, will await their glorified bodies until the millennial reign of Christ (Rev. 20:4; Dan, 12:2; Ezek. 37:11–14).

Glorification in the New Testament

There are two key passages in the New Testament regarding glorification or the resurrection of the body—1 Corinthians 15:12–58 and 1 Thessalonians 4. In 1 Corinthians 15:22–23 Paul says, “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming.” Just as Christ has already been resurrected bodily, all those who belong to Him will also be resurrected at His coming. Paul continues in 1 Corinthians 15 and speaks of those who will not die, but who will still be alive. Those who are alive will have their bodies instantaneously changed into a new body that will never grow old or weak and can never die. Paul states in 1 Corinthians 15:51, “Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 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 will be changed.”

¹ John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, gen. eds. *Biblical Doctrines: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2017), 654.

² *Ibid*, 653.

Paul also speaks about the souls of those who have died and gone to be with Christ, but who will come back and be joined with their bodies on the day of Christ's return. Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 4:14, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus." Paul goes on to say that "the dead in Christ will rise first" (1 Thess. 4:16). Those believers who are alive during this time will be caught up together with them to meet Christ in the air (4:17). This passage only makes sense if the souls of the believers who have died and gone to be with Christ will return with Him and be united with their bodies in the resurrection.

There are several other passages in the New Testament that affirm the doctrine of glorification. Jesus said in John 6:39–40, "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day." Paul says in Romans 8:11, "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you." Paul also says in Philippians 3:20–21, "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself."

Other Key Verses:

1. Romans 8:17–18. What is promised to those who suffer with Christ? _____
2. Romans 8:23. What do we eagerly await? _____
3. Colossians 3:4. When will we be revealed with Christ in glory? _____
4. 1 John 3:2. When will we be like Christ? _____

Glorification in the Old Testament

Many people think the teaching of the resurrection of the body is only a New Testament teaching. However, the Old Testament has a lot to say about glorification and the future resurrection of the body. First, when Job was abandoned by his wife, relatives, and close friends, he set his hope on the future of fellowship with God on a new earth in a resurrected body. In Job 19:25–27 he said, "As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God; whom I myself shall behold, and whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!" The author of Hebrews tells us that even Abraham believed in a resurrection (Heb. 11:19). David spoke about a future resurrection in Psalm 16:9–10 saying, "Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; my flesh also will dwell securely. For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol." Isaiah says in Isaiah 26:19, "Your dead will live; their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, for your dew is as the dew of the dawn, and the earth will give birth to the departed spirits." Although Old Testament saints did not have the details we have today about the resurrection, it is clear that they had an expectation of a future bodily resurrection.

Other Key Verses:

1. Daniel 12:2. What did Daniel prophesy about those who sleep (die) in the ground? _____
2. John 11:21–24. Where did Martha get her theology of a resurrection? _____

The Nature of Our Glorified Bodies

Although there will be differences between our natural bodies and our resurrected bodies, there will also be similarities. Our resurrected bodies will not be an entirely new body, but will in some way be like the body we currently possess in this life. Paul says in Romans 8:11, “He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.” Paul does not say our mortal bodies will be replaced, but they will be changed (cf. 1 Cor. 15:51). Our perishable bodies (the bodies we have in this present life) must put on the imperishable. This mortal body must put on immortality (1 Cor. 15:53).

Paul outlines four differences between our natural bodies and our resurrected bodies in 1 Corinthians 15:42–44 saying:

“So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable *body*, it is raised an imperishable *body*; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual *body*.”

The first fact, that our bodies will be “imperishable,” means they will not grow old or wear out or be subject to any kind of sickness or disease. They will be healthy and strong for all eternity. Also, since the process of aging is a part of the process of our natural bodies (being “perishable” or “corruptible”), it is appropriate to think that our resurrected bodies will have no sign of aging, but will have the characteristics of youthful but mature manhood or womanhood forever.³

A second fact is that our bodies will be raised “in glory.” Although our current bodies are not inherently dishonorable, they have been dishonored by the curse of sin and have been used as instruments of sin by which we have dishonored our holy and righteous God (Rom. 6:13; 7:24). The body that ought to be set apart as the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19) has yielded to sin and unrighteousness that has both dishonored God and the body. Even the most faithful Christian will experience death. However, the resurrected body will be raised in glory and will not succumb to sin or anything that dishonors God. The body raised in glory will always be pleasing to God, praising Him and enjoying Him forever.

A third fact about the resurrected body is that it will be raised “in power.” Our natural bodies can only handle so much before they are confronted with weakness. It is only a matter of time before the strongest of the strong experience weakness and can no longer go on in their strength. Jesus also speaks of the moral weakness of the flesh in Matthew 26:41 when He says, “Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Being raised in power does not mean we will become “superhuman” like fictional “superhero” characters in books or movies, but we will always possess the strength that is sufficient to do all that is in accord with God’s will.

Finally, our resurrected bodies will be raised “a spiritual body.” It is important to note that by calling our bodies “spiritual,” Paul does not mean they will not be “immaterial.” We know that our resurrected bodies will be like Christ’s resurrected body (1 John 3:2). He told His disciples in Luke 24:39, “See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” Jesus also ate fish in His resurrected body. By calling our resurrected bodies “spiritual” Paul intends to say that our bodies will be completely submissive to the Holy Spirit and His guidance. Because there will be no battle against sin, the resurrected believer will always obey the Spirit of God.

³ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), pg ?

Resurrection Order⁴

Passages such as Daniel 12:2 and John 5:28–29 tell us that there will be a resurrection of the righteous and the wicked. But does that mean that the resurrection of both groups of people will occur at the same time? Some think that it does, but there are many passages of Scripture that teach otherwise. The resurrection program occurs in stages. There are two key passages that reveal an order in the resurrection program—1 Corinthians 15:22–24 and Revelation 20:4–5.

1 Corinthians 15:22–24 says:

“For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming, then *comes* the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.”

Paul gives the “order” of resurrection in three phases: 1) Christ the first fruits; 2) after that those who are Christ’s at His coming; 3) then *comes* the end.

Revelation 20:4–5 says:

“Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I *saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection.”

Here we see a resurrection that occurs *before* the thousand year and a resurrection that occurs *after* the thousand years. Those who came to life before are saints who reign with Christ. “The rest of the dead” do not reign with Christ for the thousand years. When we view both of the passages above together, we see four stages of resurrection.

Christ’s resurrection, around AD 30, was the **first phase** of the resurrection program. His bodily resurrection serves as the template and guarantee for the resurrection of all who believe in Him. The **second phase** of resurrection are “those who are Christ’s at His coming.” This refers to the resurrected church saints, both dead and alive, at the rapture (1 Thess. 4:14–17). At the rapture, the dead in Christ will rise first and those who are alive will be “caught up” to meet Jesus in the air. While not occurring at the time of the rapture, a **third phase** also includes Old Testament saints (Dan. 12:2; Ezek. 37:11–14) and those saints who are martyred during the tribulation (Rev. 20:4). They experience the resurrection as a result of Jesus coming to earth to reign. The **fourth phase** occurs at “the end.” This resurrection includes “the rest of the dead” in Revelation 20:5 who are unbelievers destined for the great white throne judgment (Rev. 20:11–15).

But do any believers experience resurrection at this fourth stage of the resurrection program? This is more difficult to answer, but they might for the following reason. Non-glorified saints will enter the millennial kingdom as a result of being saved during the seven-year tribulation period. These are non-glorified saints who bore children with non-glorified bodies during the millennial kingdom (Isa. 65:20, 23). However, since 1 Corinthians 15:50 states that non-glorified bodies cannot enter God’s eternal kingdom, these saints must receive glorified bodies at some point. It is likely that these non-glorified saints will receive resurrection bodies immediately at death or at the end of the millennium.

⁴ Adopted and quoted from *Biblical Doctrines*, 862–64.